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PHOTO: PTI

Former ICICI CEO found guilty of money laundering

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

An appellate tribunal has said there was a "prima facie" case of money laundering against former ICICI Bank CEO and MD Chanda Kochhar and her husband in a corruption case involving the Videocon Group, as it upheld a 2020 ED order attaching a Mumbai flat of the couple worth crores of rupees. The tribunal, in an order issued on 3 July, said it finds "substance" in the "quid pro quo" allegation made by the Enforcement Directorate against Chanda Kochhar for sanction of a loan of Rs 300 crore to Videocon International Electronics Ltd (VIEL), as post this disbursal, a sum of Rs 64 crore was transferred by the Videocon Group to NRPL, a company of her husband Deepak Kochhar. *—PTI*

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US is breaking up with UNESCO again

PARIS, 22 JULY

The US announced on Tuesday it will again pull out of the UN's educational, scientific and cultural agency because it believes that its involvement is not in the country's national interest and that it promotes anti-Israel speech. This comes two years after the US rejoined UNESCO after leaving in 2018, during US President Donald Trump's first administration. The decision will take effect at the end of December 2026. This will be the third time that the US has left UNESCO, which is based in Paris, and the second time during a Trump administration. UNESCO's Director General Audrey Azoulay said she "deeply" regrets the US decision it was expected. The US provides a notable share of UNESCO's budget. But the organisation should be able to cope with diversified funding sources. The US contributes 8 per cent of the agency's budget. *—PTI*

Nadda: VP didn't resign because of BJP snub

Nadda and Rijiju stood Dhankhar up in a BAC meeting

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

Union minister JP Nadda on Tuesday said the Vice President's office was informed that he and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju would not attend a BAC meeting convened by Jagdeep Dhankhar last evening, shortly before he resigned from the post. Congress General Secretary Ramesh claimed Dhankhar "took umbrage" as Nadda and Rijiju, two high ranking party officials, skipped the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) meeting.

"The Vice President's office was intimated about our inability to attend the meeting," said Nadda, the Union Health Minister and BJP President.

He was speaking to reporters after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh held a meeting with senior ministers, including Nadda, Rijiju, Home Minister Amit Shah, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, and Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal.

Shah also later met Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.

Dhankhar resigned on Monday evening, citing medical reasons.

Former vice president Jagdeep Dhankhar, BJP Chief JP Nadda, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju PHOTO: PTI

In March this year, Dhankhar was admitted to AIIMS in Delhi for some days after experiencing uneasiness and chest pain. After his hospitalisation, he was advised to cut back his trips outside of the national capital for some time.

Following that, Dhankhar collapsed while attending the Golden Jubilee of Kumaon University during his visit to Nainital in Uttarakhand in June.

However, the Congress claimed the reasons behind Dhankhar's resignation are "far deeper" than health issues cited by him.

The election to appoint Dhankar's successor will have to be held "as soon as possible", according to Clause 2 of Article 68 of the Constitution. An election to fill a vacancy in the office of the vice president occurring due to his death, resignation or removal, or otherwise will be held "as soon as possible" after it becomes vacant, it states. *—PTI*

- In March, Dhankhar was admitted to AIIMS in Delhi for some days after experiencing uneasiness and chest pain. Dhankhar also collapsed while attending an event in June

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Dy Chairman Harivansh chairs RS proceedings

Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh chaired the proceedings of the morning session on Tuesday, a day after Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar resigned from his post. The Vice President of India is ex-officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. Usually Dhankhar used to chair the proceedings at the beginning of the day.

HOW IS A VICE PRESIDENT ELECTED?

As per Article 66 of the Constitution of India, the Vice-President is elected by the members of the Electoral College consisting of the members of both Houses of Parliament in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote. The Electoral College comprises of a total of 788 members of both Houses of Parliament. Since, all the electors are members of both Houses of Parliament, the value of vote of each Member of Parliament would be same.

A district election officer in Hajipur, Bihar PHOTO: PTI

SIR reveals 18 lakh dead, 7L duplicate voters in Bihar: EC

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

The Election Commission of India on Tuesday shared that during Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, it has discovered that 18 lakh of the registered voters have died, and 26 lakh electors have shifted to another constituency.

ECI also noted that more than 7 lakh voters are enrolled at two places.

In a release, ECI shared that out of the total 7,89,69,844 voters, 97.30 per cent, or 76,834,228, have filled the enumeration forms so far.

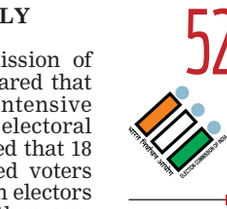
ECI added that 21.36 lakh electors have not submitted their forms so far.

ERO/BLOs have also shared a list of nearly 52.30 lakh electors who are reportedly deceased, have permanently shifted, or have enrolled at multiple places.

According to the poll body, a full one-month period, from 1 August to 1 September, will be available to any member of the public to file objections.

52 LAKH

Bihar voters were not present at their addresses and another 18 lakh have died: EC



Meanwhile, the Opposition has repeatedly criticised SIR, accusing the NDA alliance of taking voting rights away from people.

MP Priyanka Gandhi alleged on X that elections were "rigged" in Maharashtra earlier by inflating the voter list, and now same attempts are made in Bihar. Bihar Assembly elections are expected to be held in October or November; however, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has not announced an official date. *—ANI*

4 held after man dies in City manhole

BENGALURU, 22 JULY

A 31-year-old labourer tragically died hours after suffering breathing difficulties while working on a manhole in Akshaya Nagar in the City.

The deceased, identified as Puttaswamy, was engaged in the cleaning operation alongside fellow daily wage worker, Antony, when the incident occurred at approximately 7pm on 20 July. The task was assigned by a man named Nagaraju.

Police reports indicate that neither Puttaswamy nor Antony were provided with essential safety gear.

Upon entering the manhole, both workers inhaled toxic gases and experienced severe respiratory distress. Despite managing to escape, they did not receive any medical assistance, even as Puttaswamy reported distress.

Puttaswamy was found dead at his home the following morning. In response to a complaint from his father, authorities registered a case under Section 106 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, addressing negligence leading to death, as well as relevant provisions of the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act. Four individuals, including Nagaraju, have been arrested. *—PTI*

LAL SALAAM

The mortal remains of former Kerala chief minister and veteran CPI(M) leader VS Achuthanandan being taken to his native place Alappuzha from the state Secretariat, in Thiruvananthapuram, Tuesday PHOTO: PTI

MATTER OF IMPORTANCE

SC refuses to stay QR code ruling for Kanwar Yatra eateries

Kanwariya during Ganga Aarti on the eve of Sawan Shivratri during the Kanwar Yatra in Haridwar, Uttarakhand PHOTO: PTI

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

The Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to stay the QR code directive for eateries along Kanwar Yatra route in UP, Uttarakhand and directed all hotel owners along the route to display their licences and registration certificates in line with the statutory requirements.

A bench of Justices MM Sundresh and N Kotiswar Singh said it was not going into the other issues over display of names of the hotel or dhaba owner and the QR code.

"Today is the last day of the yatra. Therefore, at this stage we would only pass an order that all the respective hotel owners shall comply with the mandate of displaying the licence and the registration certificate," the bench said. Justice Sundresh added a vegetarian may choose to go to only a place serving exclusively vegetarian food, especially during a pilgrimage. *—PTI*

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SC seeks Centre and States' response on timeline for bills assent

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

The Supreme Court on Tuesday sought responses of the Centre and all states on the Presidential reference raising Constitutional issues on whether timelines could be imposed for dealing with Bills passed by Assembly.

Observing that the issues raised in the presidential reference will affect "the entire country", a five-judge Constitution bench headed by Chief Justice of India BR Gavai sought the replies in a week and fixed the reference for fixing timelines and other procedural details on 29 July.

"There are issues of interpretation of the Constitution. We have requested the Attorney General to assist us. Issue notice to the Union and all state governments," ordered the bench which also comprised Justices Surya Kant, Vikram Nath, PS Narasimha and AS Chandurkar.

During a brief hearing, senior advocates KK Venugopal and P Wilson, representing Kerala and Tamil Nadu respectively, opposed the reference and questioned its maintainability.

President Droupadi Murmu exercised powers under Article 143(1) to ask the court whether timelines could be imposed by judicial orders for exercise of discretion by the President while dealing with the bills. The apex court has agreed to consider her 14 questions.

The case stems from Supreme Court's verdict on Tamil Nadu accusing its Governor of sitting on Bills. *—PTI*

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Economist Gita Gopinath leaves IMF to join Harvard

NEW YORK, 22 JULY

Gita Gopinath, the Indian-American economist serving as the first deputy managing director at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), has announced her decision to return to Harvard University as a professor of economics. Gopinath, who made history as the IMF's first female chief economist, expressed her appreciation for her nearly seven years at the organisation, describing it as "a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

She will rejoin the Harvard Economics Department on 1 September, assuming the role of the inaugural Gregory and Ania Coffey Professor of Economics. Gopinath stated her intention to further advance research in international finance and macroeconomics. Having joined the IMF in January 2019, Gopinath was promoted to first deputy managing director in January 2022. Her tenure has included critical contributions during significant global challenges such as the Covid-19 pandemic, economic crises. *—PTI*

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AI SPIRALLING?

Air India plane catches fire in Delhi right after landing

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

Yet another tragedy was averted on Tuesday when Air India A321 plane's auxiliary power unit caught fire after landing at the Delhi airport at 12.12 pm. All passengers and crew members were reportedly safe.

A statement from the airline said that, "Flight AI 315, operating from Hong Kong to Delhi, experienced an auxiliary power unit (APU) fire shortly after it had landed and parked at the gate.

The incident occurred while passengers had begun disembarking, and the APU was automatically shut down as per system design." An airline spokesperson said that there was some damage to the aircraft, while passengers and crew members disembarked normally and are safe.

The aircraft has been grounded and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is looking into the incident, a source said.

This is the third such incident involving an Air India plane in two days.

On Monday, a Kolkata-bound Air India plane aborted take-off due to a technical snag at the Delhi airport and an Air India plane coming from Kochi veered off the runway while landing in heavy rain at the Mumbai airport, on the same day. *—PTI*

The plane's auxiliary power unity caught on fire PHOTO: X

PHOTO: ANI

Achuthanandan remained true to his principles: CM

BENGALURU, 22 JULY

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday condoled the death of veteran CPI(M) leader VS Achuthanandan and said that he was a steadfast voice for justice and remained true to his principles. Achuthanandan, the former chief minister of Kerala, died on Monday in Thiruvananthapuram. He had been receiving treatment since 23 June, following a cardiac arrest. "Shri V S Achuthanandan (1923-2025) was a steadfast voice for justice and the common good throughout his long public life. He remained true to his principles-in struggles on the ground and in positions of power, including as Chief Minister of Kerala (2006-2011)," Siddaramaiah posted on X. A founding member of CPI(M), he was a lifelong champion of workers' rights and social justice. *—PTI*

Entrepreneur found dead in Mangaluru

MANGALURU, 22 JULY

A 40-year-old entrepreneur, Nitin Suvarna, has died by suspected suicide after reportedly ingesting a poisonous substance in Mangaluru of the State, police confirmed on Tuesday. Suvarna was well-known for his ventures within the hotel industry. Authorities indicate that he believed to have taken poisonous tablets late on Monday evening, leading to this tragic incident. The underlying motive for his actions has yet to be determined, with investigations currently ongoing. Thus far, no evidence of foul play has been discovered, and a post-mortem report is awaited to ascertain the precise cause of death, according to a senior police official. *—PTI*

1 more nabbed in Bantwal murder, 11 held so far

MANGALURU, 22 JULY

Police on Tuesday said one more person has been arrested for the murder of a 32-year-old man in Bantwal taluk of Dakshina Kannada district, bringing the total number of arrests in the case to 11. The latest accused arrested for the murder of Abdul Rahiman is Sahith alias Shahith, 24, a resident of Ammunje village. He was nabbed late Monday night. Rahiman and his 29-year-old co-worker, Kalandar Shafi, were unloading gravel on 27 May when two motorcycle-borne men allegedly attacked them with a sword. Rahiman died on the spot, while Shafi sustained serious injuries. The suspect has been remanded to police custody, even as the motive is yet to be ascertained. *—PTI*

3 Kolar students get corporal punishment

KOLAR, 22 JULY

Three Class 6 students at the Morarji Desai Residential School at M Kottur Balasandra village in Mulbagal taluk in Kolar were allegedly subjected to corporal punishment by the hostel warden. One boy sustained severe injuries with several bruises turning black after being beaten. The warden, Mahesh Gireddy, has been placed under suspension for his act. According to officials in the Social Welfare Department, the incident occurred on Monday when a group of boys went "ghost" hunting at night but were caught by the warden. The residential school has about 246 students from 6th Standard to 10th Standards. It is a co-educational institution. Following the incident, the school Principal conducted a meeting with the parents and assured them that such things would not happen again. The warden in question tendered an unconditional apology to the parents. *—Salar News*

Mahadayi water diversion: Goa to move SC against K'taka

Goa CM says can't stop K'taka, but can file contempt plea

PANAJI, 22 JULY

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Tuesday informed the legislative Assembly that his government will file a contempt petition in the Supreme Court against State for trying to divert the Mahadayi river water.

The two adjoining coastal States are embroiled in a dispute over sharing the Mahadayi river water. The BJP-ruled Goa has accused the Congress-governed Karnataka of planning to divert the river water by constructing two dams.

The Mahadayi river originates in the Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary in State, and flows through Goa, and Maharashtra as it empties into the Arabian Sea at Panaji in Goa.

The Centre had set up a tribunal which decided on sharing the river water between the three riparian states -- Goa, Karnataka and Maharashtra. Goa and Karnataka along with Maharashtra have appealed against the tribunal's order on sharing water by the three states in the Supreme Court, and the matter is sub-judice.

The two adjoining coastal States are embroiled in a dispute over sharing the Mahadayi river water *PHOTO: ANI*

- The BJP-ruled Goa has accused the Congress-governed Karnataka of planning to divert the river water by constructing two dams. The Mahadayi river originates in Bhimgad Sanctuary

Opposition MLAs in the Goa assembly on Tuesday cornered the Pramod Sawant government in the House over its failure to stop Karnataka from conducting illegal activities.

Raising the issue, independent MLA Aleixo Reginaldo Lourenco sought to know the progress of the case pending before the apex court against the verdict of the tribunal on the share of Mahadayi river water.

Speaking on the issue, Sawant said Karnataka has been actively involved in activities aimed at diverting the Mahadayi river water.

"We cannot stop their activities as they are happening in their jurisdiction. But the Goa government has taken every step to counter their attempts to divert the Mahadayi water," he said.

The chief minister added that he had personally met Union Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Bhupender Yadav over the issue.

"The Union ministry (has assured that it) will not give any permission to Karnataka to conduct any such activities," he said. *—PTI*

TRAGEDY IN RAICHUR

Food poisoning kills 3 of a family

RAICHUR, 22 JULY

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Three members of a family died and two others are undergoing treatment following suspected food poisoning in Raichur district, police said on Tuesday.

The deceased are Ramesh, 35, and his daughters Nagamma, 8, and Deepa, 6. His wife, Padma, 34, and two other children - Krishna, 11, and Chaitra, 10 - have been admitted to the Raichur Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS).

The incident occurred in K Timmapur village of Sirwar taluk on Monday night. According to family members, the six had consumed a dinner of cluster beans curry, roti, rice, and sambar. The cluster beans were harvested from their own farm. The family suffered severe stomach pain and vomiting soon after dinner and were rushed to hospital at 4am.

Hunamthappa, father of the deceased, said the chickpeas had been sprayed with pesticide. "My son grows cotton on his two acres and vegetables too. On Saturday, he sprayed pesticide on the chickpeas."

Health department staff have also arrived and collected food samples for investigation and an FIR has been registered.

— Salar News

SIT to soon begin probe into Dharmasthala mass burials: HM

BENGALURU, 22 JULY

Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara on Tuesday said that a Special Investigation Team (SIT), constituted to probe allegations of mass burials in Dharmasthala in the Dakshina Kannada district, will soon begin the inquiry.

The SIT, headed by Pronab Mohanty, Director General of Police (Internal Security Division), consists of Deputy Inspector General of Police (Recruitment) MN Anucheth and IPS officers Soumyalatha SK and Jitendra Kumar Dayama.

Responding to a question on reports claiming that two officers from SIT were seeking to leave for personal reasons, he said, " If anyone from the team has requested the DG or the Commissioner, they will be replaced."

- About a report given to the government in 2018 regarding unnatural deaths in Belthangady (taluk under which Dharmasthala comes) and no action being taken on that, Parameshwara said he was unaware of it

A former sanitation worker, whose identity has not been revealed, has claimed that he worked in Dharmasthala between 1995 and 2014, and that he was forced to bury hundreds of bodies, including women and minors. He alleged that some were raped and also gave a statement before a magistrate.

To a question about an alleged report submitted to the government in 2018 regarding unnatural deaths in Belthangady (the taluk under which Dharmasthala comes) and no action being taken based on that, Parameshwara said he was unaware of it. *—PTI*

E-KHATA REGISTRATION

Residents of RT Nagar wards arrived to make their E-Khata organised by Minister Bhyrati Suresh at HAL Grounds in Bengaluru on Tuesday *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

CID to probe multi-crore fraud case in Mangaluru

MANGALURU, 22 JULY

The multi-crore fraud case involving 43-year-old prime accused, Roshan Saldanha, was transferred to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) on Tuesday.

Saldanha, a resident of Bajal in Mangaluru, is currently in judicial custody. He is accused of "duping" investors of several crores through fraudulent investment schemes that promised high returns, police said.

Mangaluru City Police have filed a formal petition before the jurisdictional court seeking Saldanha's custody, which will be heard on 23 July.

CEN police station booked a case when a Bihar businessman alleged fraud related to a Rs 10 crore land deal. The case involves the use of forged documents, shell companies, and sophisticated methods of financial manipulation.

Fraud cases exceeding Rs 10 crore are eligible for CID investigation.

- Roshan Saldanha, a resident of Bajal in Mangaluru, is currently in judicial custody. He is accused of "duping" investors of several crores through fraudulent investment schemes that promised high returns

Saldanha, already in judicial custody, faces two FIRs in Mangaluru alone, including a recent one from a Hyderabad-based individual alleging a Rs 1 crore fraud.

Police said his victims span across Maharashtra, Assam, and Andhra Pradesh - the largest being a Rs 20 crore fraud case from Assam and a Rs 5 crore case from Maharashtra.

Officials have identified multiple bank accounts linked to Saldanha with transactions exceeding Rs 50 crore. *—PTI*

State DGP limits siren use for VIP movements

BENGALURU, 21 JULY

The Director General and Inspector General of Police of the State, MA Saleem, has issued a directive to all unit officers to limit the use of sirens by escort vehicles during VIP movements, citing concerns over public safety and noise pollution.

MA Saleem *PHOTO: ANI*

The order highlights that excessive use of sirens can expose the routes of dignitaries to unauthorised individuals, increasing security risks. Additionally, the noise created by sirens causes inconvenience to the public and contributes to overall noise pollution. Saleem pointed out that the sudden activation of sirens can lead to confusion among motorists, resulting in erratic driving and a chaotic environment for both escort and general traffic.

- The order highlights that excessive use of sirens can expose the routes of dignitaries to unauthorised individuals, increasing security risks

Instead of relying on sirens, the DGP encourages the use of telecommunication systems, such as wireless communication, for coordinating the emergency movement of vehicles more effectively. Sirens should be reserved exclusively for emergency service vehicles, like ambulances, police, and fire engines, and only in unavoidable situations.

All unit officers are instructed to ensure strict compliance with this order by relaying the directives to their subordinate officers and staff. *—PTI*

Rivals last week, Jarkiholi & Katti now friends?

BELAGAVI, 22 JULY

In a surprising move in Belagavi's political circle, PWD Minister Satish Jarkiholi and former BJP MP Ramesh Katti represented Chikkodi constituency were seen behaving like close friends at an event organised by the Jain community in Harugeri town in Raibag taluk. This comes just a few days after they locked horns over.

Satish Jarkiholi, Ramesh Katti *PHOTO: ANI*

It may be recalled that Katti, on Saturday, targeting Jarkiholi, who was also trying to enter the local politics. He had said that he would not allow outsiders to rule or interfere in the affairs of his taluk.

The duo disagreed with each other over the election of members to Hukkeri Private Electric Suppy Corporation Ltd and Belagavi District Cooperate Credit Bank (BDCC).

Jarkiholi said he would reply to Katti's remarks. However, during the Jain community event both were seen on the stage holding a serious discussion.

Lingayat legislators of the district met at a Mutt in Kolhapur last week where a decision was taken that the Lingayats will be in control of BDCC. Former minister AB Patil alleged that former Chikkodi BJP MP Annasaheb Jolle caused his defeat in the previous polls, adding that Jolle used the Lingayat community for his political gains. – *Salar News*

IN BELAGAVI

Pvt school uses govt school's building

BELAGAVI, 22 JULY

A private girl's school has been running inside a government schools building in Tilakwadi, Belagavi since the start of the current academic year.

The private Marathi medium school, Aadarsha Balika Vidyalaya Mahila Sanghatane, has been using eight of the ten rooms of the government school. The government school reportedly allowed Balika Vidyalaya to use its classrooms as it had a small number of students.

The government school, established 108 years ago, has 33 students while the private school has about 900 girl students.

Surprisingly, to facilitate the private school, the education department changed the timing of government school from 8am to 11am.

The government school, established 108 years ago, has 33 students while the private school has about 900 girl students *PHOTO: SALAR*

Belagavi Deputy Director of Public Instructions (DDPI) Leelavati Hiremath said that the building was given to the private school based on the resolution passed unanimously by the school management committee and official approval of legislators Abhay Patil and Asif Sait representing south and north assembly constituencies, respectively.

BJP MLA Patil said that the Mahila Sanghatane shifted to the government school as there was construction work going on in its building. "Myself and MLA Sait were unaware about changed timing of the government school students," Patil added.

Congress legislator Sait said even though the school didn't fall in his jurisdiction, he gave his consent to run the private school in government building. "Eight blocks remained unused for a low strength in the government school," Sait justified.

—Salar News

Mysuru anganwadi sees abysmal enrollment

MYSURU, 22 JULY

District-in-charge secretary and IAS officer S Selvakumar expressed concerns over the declining enrolment of children under six years old in the Mysuru district's anganwadi centres. During a meeting on Monday, the officer called for officials from the Women and Child Welfare Department to prepare a detailed report identifying the reasons.

The meeting revealed that Mysuru district has 2,933 anganwadi centres, serving 157,138 beneficiaries, which includes 47,796 children under three and 75,536 under six, alongside 14,880 pregnant women and 13,157 lactating mothers. An alarming trend noted was a significant number of enrolled children frequently absent.

Selvakumar emphasised the need to investigate the causes.

The discussion also touched on other developmental concerns, including agricultural challenges due to insufficient rainfall and drinking water initiatives. Zilla Panchayat officials, including CEO S Ukeshkumar and Deputy Secretary M. Krishnaraju, were present as local authorities seek solutions to enhance early childhood education in the region. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: PTI

Majority want to be multilingual: Pawan Kalyan

AMARAVATI, 22 JULY

Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan on Tuesday said that the "majority of the people" are thinking that they want to be multilingual and should be given a fair chance. the actor-politician claimed that "political leaders should widen their minds and broaden their horizon". "Majority of the people think they want to be multi-linguistic (multilingual). Let us give them a fair chance and a fair opportunity," Kalyan told PTI Videos. Stating that English has become his language of thought, the Jana Sena founder expressed sadness that he could not find the same in Hindi or Kannada or Marathi. *—PTI*

Rahul speech case: Influencer gets SC relief

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

The Supreme Court granted interim protection from arrest to social media influencer and political commentator Raushan Sinha on 17 July, in connection with a case related to a post referencing an alleged controversial speech by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. The case originated from Rahul Gandhi's alleged statement in Lok Sabha last year, where he purportedly said, "Those who call themselves Hindus are 24 hours engaged in violence, hatred, and lies". Earlier, the Telangana HC had refused to grant anticipatory bail to Sinha for his social media post while directing him to appear before the Investigating Officer. Apprehensive of being arrested, Sinha did not comply with that order. *—ANI*

Let's wait and see: Seeman on AIADMK alliance

VILLUPURAM, 22 JULY

Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK) Chief Coordinator Seeman was responding to the alliance invitation reportedly extended by AIADMK General Secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami, when he said, "Let's wait and see". Speaking to the media after inaugurating a clinic run by an NTK functionary in Villupuram, Seeman said about the proposal: "There are still eight months left for the election". He went on to slam both the BJP and DMK, stating, "BJP says DMK should not come to power...But we, NTK, are the only true alternative to both ruling evils. You can't extinguish fire with fire--you need water". Referring to the Cauvery water dispute between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, he also said, "It's both the BJP and Congress in Karnataka that refuse even a single drop of water to Tamil Nadu". *—ANI*

Ex-CM Baghel's son sent to judicial custody

RAIPUR, 22 JULY

A special court here on Tuesday remanded Chaitanya Baghel, son of senior Congress leader and former chief minister Bhupesh Baghel, in a 14-day judicial custody in a money laundering case linked to the alleged liquor scam. Chaitanya was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on 18 July. During his custodial remand, Chaitanya was interrogated and confronted with statements and documents. The agency reportedly sought judicial custody from the court since there wasn't much else to interrogate him about. Chaitanya will remain in judicial custody till 4 AugusT. The ED claimed in a statement that Chaitanya "handled" more than Rs 1,000 crore worth of "proceeds of crime" generated from a liquor "scam" in the state and used Rs 16.7 crore for the development of his real estate project. *—PTI*

Health issues or a BJP 'conspiracy'?

Several Opposition party leaders question Dhankhar's sudden resignation as Vice President

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

Jagdeep Dhankhar's decision to resign as Vice President on Monday night has triggered a firestorm of speculation on whether there was more to it than "to prioritise health care".

The Opposition in Bihar Assembly, RJD claimed on Tuesday that his resignation was a BJP conspiracy, hatched with the aim of "shunting" CM Nitish Kumar ahead of the Assembly polls.

"For long, the BJP has been wanting to get rid of Nitish Kumar and have its own CM," RJD charged, claiming that it was an act of "desperation".

With Dhankar out of the picture, there is a good chance that the saffron party would try and keep Nitish happy by making him VP, according to reports.

Meanwhile, the Congress claimed the reasons are "far deeper" than health issues cited by him, and said his resignation speaks highly of him

With Dhankhar out of the picture, chances are bright for Bihar CM Nitish Kumar as a Vice President candidate *PHOTO: PTI*

but poorly of those who got him elected to the post. All the party leaders who questioned his sudden resignation asked the Centre to explain what led to the decision.

The Congress has also urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to convince Dhankhar to change his mind.

Jairam Ramesh said Dhankhar took both the government and the opposition to task in equal measure.

Cash discovery row & Justice Verma

Though Dhankar often waded into contentious matters as VP, one area that was at the receiving end of his punches more than others was the Judiciary as its "foot soldier".

In this context, speculations are also ripe that his resignation has something to do with the cash discovery row involving Justice Yashwant Varma.

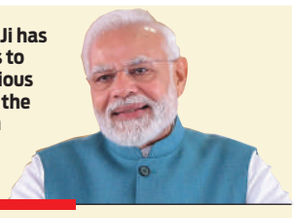
Dhankhar resigned on the first day of the Monsoon Session, but not before accepting Opposition MPs' impeachment notice against the judge.

Accepting the notice meant that the Union government could not go on the offensive against Justice Varma and this disappointed the NDA alliance, eventually resulting in his resignation.

Yet another theory is Dhankar's handling of the Judiciary. As a lawyer himself, it is said that his relentless criticism of the judiciary and the my way or highway approach made some in the ruling alliance uncomfortable.

Dhankhar, 74, assumed office in August 2022, and his tenure was till 2027. *—Agencies*

> Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar Ji has got many opportunities to serve our country in various capacities, including as the Vice President of India. Wishing him good health.
>
> -Narendra Modi, Prime Minister



NDA POISED TO WIN VP ELECTION

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

The ruling NDA alliance holds a comfortable lead in the race for India's next Vice President, following the unexpected resignation of Jagdeep Dhankhar on Monday evening, reportedly due to medical reasons.

He submitted his resignation to President Droupadi Murmu and stepped down with immediate effect.

The VP is elected by members of both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, including nominated members of the Upper House.

The Lok Sabha has 542 sitting members due to a few vacancies. With a combined strength of 786 in both Houses, a candidate requires 394 votes to win.

The BJP-led NDA commands the support of 293 MPs in Lok Sabha and 129 in Rajya Sabha, assuming backing from nominated members — a total of 422 votes. The VP is elected by proportional representation via single transferable vote and secret ballot and serves a five-year term.

India not a dharmashala: BJP slams Oppn's protest

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with Samajwadi Party MP Akhilesh Yadav, RJD MP Misa Bharti, DMK MP Kanimozhi Karunanidhi and other INDIA bloc MPs stages a protest against the ongoing Special Intensive Revision in Bihar, during the Monsoon session of Parliament, in New Delhi, on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

The BJP has condemned opposition parties for staging protests against the Bihar voter list revision, accusing them of engaging in "gundagardi" (hooliganism) to facilitate electoral rights for "infiltrators," including Bangladeshis and Rohingyas.

Opposition MPs, led by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Samajwadi Party Chief Akhilesh Yadav, protested the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar on Tuesday, claiming it undermines electoral integrity.

Demonstrators gathered at the Makar Dwar steps of

Parliament, brandishing placards reading "SIR: Stealing Indian Rights". Senior BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad defended the voter verification process, asserting that the Opposition is fearful of political ramifications if citizens' voting rights are properly confirmed. He highlighted discrepancies in Aadhaar card registrations exceeding district populations in Bihar as a cause for concern. Union Minister Giriraj Singh also echoed these sentiments.

Meanwhile, Opposition leaders have demanded Prime Minister Narendra Modi's presence in Parliament to address pressing issues, including the SIR process, the Pahalgam terror attack, and rising violence against marginalized communities.

Sources indicate that opposition members are determined to raise the SIR issue in both Houses of Parliament, as they plan to insist on Gandhi having the opportunity to address Parliament directly. *—PTI*

No reports of manual scavenging in India: Govt

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

No reports of manual scavenging being "practised" have been received from any state or Union Territory (UT), Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Ramdas Athawale said on Tuesday. Athawale's statement in Lok Sabha comes amid long-standing concerns raised by activists and independent watchdogs over continued instances of manual scavenging-related deaths. *—PTI*

No plan to scrap ST/SC students scholarship

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

The Centre said on Tuesday that there is no proposal to discontinue the Post-Matric Scholarship scheme for Scheduled Tribe or Scheduled Caste students. There have been concerns about whether the scheme will continue beyond 2025-26. It is being implemented with funding and eligibility parameters approved by the Cabinet and Expenditure Finance Committee. *—PTI*

Who are they?: Tharoor's takes jibe at Cong leader

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

Days after Kerala Congress leader K Muraleedharan's scathing, party MP Shashi Tharoor on Tuesday asked who are these people making such remarks and what position they hold in the party.

Muraleedharan on Sunday hit out at Tharoor, saying that he will not be invited to any party programme in the state capital till he changes his stance on the national security issue. He said Tharoor, also a Congress Working Committee member, was no longer considered "one of us". His response had come a day after Tharoor had said that the nation comes first and parties are the means of making the country better.

Asked about the remarks, Tharoor told reporters, "First of all, it seems to me that the people saying this also have to have a basis for saying this. Who are they? What is their party's position? I would like to know."

Tharoor had also said that when people like him call for cooperating with other parties in the interests of national security, their own parties feel that it's disloyal to them, and that becomes a big problem.

Muraleedharan had earlier hit out at Tharoor over sharing of a survey suggesting he is UDF's most preferred choice for CM saying. *—PTI*

Honeytrapping MLAs led to MVA govt's collapse: Sena (UBT)

MUMBAI, 22 JULY

Shiv Sena (UBT) on Tuesday alleged that hidden cameras and a Pegasus-like surveillance system were used to honeytrap MLAs and MPs of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), ultimately leading to the collapse of the Uddhav Thackeray-led Maharashtra government in 2022.

In an editorial published in Saamana, the party claimed that at least 18 MLAs and four MPs from the undivided Shiv Sena and NCP were blackmailed into switching sides after being trapped and pressured by Central agencies.

It stated that even police officials conducted surveillance on Opposition leaders using Israeli spyware-like technologies. *—PTI*

Pay Rs 25L to Ajith's kin: HC to TN govt

CHENNAI, 22 JULY

The Madras High Court's Madurai Bench has ordered the Tamil Nadu government to pay an interim compensation of Rs 25 lakh to the family of Ajith Kumar, who tragically died in custody on 28 June.

This directive came after the court assessed the state's cooperation during the investigation and deemed the previously allocated sum insufficient. The government had initially provided Rs 7.5 lakh, along with three cents of land and a job for Kumar's brother.

The case has garnered significant public attention following the emergence of a video allegedly showing Kumar being violently beaten while in police custody.

Arrested in connection with a jewellery theft, Ajith was reportedly taken to a cowshed for torture and succumbed to his injuries the following day. *—Agencies*

END OF AN ERA

IAF set to retire MiG-21

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

After over six decades of service, the Indian Air Force (IAF) is set to retire the iconic MiG-21 fighter jets by September 2023, marking a pivotal moment in India's military aviation history. The remaining squadrons are currently stationed at the Nal air base in Rajasthan, and their phase-out comes amid scrutiny over safety due to a series of crashes.

The MiG-21 will be replaced by the more modern Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas Mark 1A.

Inducted in 1963, the MiG-21 was India's first supersonic jet, seeing action in major conflicts, including the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War and the 1999 Kargil War.

Notably, it was also involved in the 2019 Balakot airstrike. However, the aircraft has faced a mixed reputation, with over 400 units lost to crashes, resulting in the deaths of more than 100 pilots and civilians.

Sources indicate that the MiG-21 fleet will undergo a ceremonial decommissioning on 19 September at Chandigarh airbase, signifying the end of an era for a fighter jet that has long been a crucial component of India's defence apparatus. *—Agencies*

'Don't know to play online Rummy'

NASHIK, 22 JULY

Maharashtra Agriculture Minister Manikrao Kokate has said he will take legal action against opposition leaders who, he claims, defamed him by sharing a video suggesting he was playing 'rummy' on his mobile phone during a legislative session.

The NCP leader insisted on Tuesday that he does not know how to play online rummy and said the game merely popped up briefly on his phone screen.

NCP (SP) MLAs Rohit Pawar and Jitendra Awhad shared video clips of Kokate in the legislative council, alleging he was playing 'Junglee Rummy'.

Amid mounting pressure for his resignation, Kokate maintained he was checking legislative updates when the app appeared. He insisted the video was misleading and taken out of context. -PTI

Meanwhile, the minister sparked outrage after calling the government a "beggar" while defending his earlier remark likening farmers to beggars.

Cm Devendra Fadnavis called Kokate's comments inappropriate and reaffirmed the state's financial health. NCP (SP) leaders and Shiv Sena (UBT) activists condemned Kokate.

He was previously convicted in a forgery case, but his sentence was stayed. *—PTI*

REST IN PEACE

Hundreds throng to pay homage to Achuthanandan

T'PURAM, 22 JULY

Hundreds of people waited outside the historic Darbar Hall here to pay homage to former Chief Minister and veteran CPI(M) leader VS Achuthanandan on Tuesday, a day after he breathed his last at the age of 101.

The mortal remains of the veteran were taken in a procession from his son's residence to the Hall inside the Secretariat for official public homage.

Thousands of people, including women, the elderly, and students, paid their last respects to the late CM when his body was kept at the old AKG Centre on Monday. Many more gathered in front of his son's house after midnight to catch a glimpse of their beloved leader.

According to party sources, his cremation will take place at the public crematorium in Alappuzha Valiya Chudukadu by Wednesday noon.

The government has declared a public holiday on Tuesday and a three-day mourning period as a mark of respect for the former chief minister.

The veteran leader died at 3.20 pm on Monday while undergoing treatment at Pattom SUT Hospital, where he was admitted and was undergoing treatment since suffering a heart attack in June.

A founding member of CPI(M), Achuthanandan was a lifelong champion of workers' rights, land reforms, and social justice.

He served as Kerala's CM from 2006 to 2011 and was elected to the State Assembly seven times. *—PTI*

The mortal remains of former Kerala chief minister and veteran CPI (M) leader VS Achuthanandan being taken to his native in Alappuzha from the Secretariat, in Thiruvananthapuram, on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

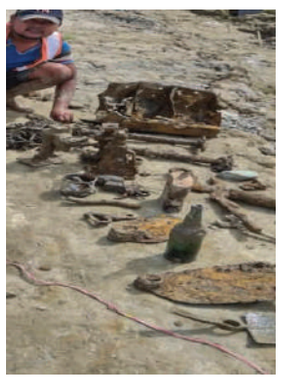


PHOTO: PTI

WWII relics found at Manipur construction site

IMPHAL, 22 JULY

Construction workers in Manipur's Imphal West district uncovered relics believed to be from the Second World War on Tuesday morning, officials said. The items, found around four feet underground during digging work in Langthabal, include rusted empty shell cases, a grenade, water bottles, spades, tin cans, and spent shells. Officials believe the artefacts belonged to Allied soldiers stationed nearby during the 1944 Battle of Imphal. A major Allied camp was located at Canchipur hills, close to the discovery site. Imperial Japanese forces had surrounded Manipur's hills but failed to break the Allied defences in the Imphal Valley. The Battle of Imphal, along with Kohima, was key in halting the Japanese advance into India. *—PTI*

Gujarat couple caught smuggling 28kg of gold paste

SURAT, 22 JULY

A couple from Gujarat were caught smuggling gold paste at Surat airport on 20 July after arriving from Dubai on an Air India flight. A plainclothes CISF officer grew suspicious due to their odd walking pattern and visible bulges around their waists. Customs officials were alerted and a physical search was conducted. The woman, wearing a salwar suit, had 16kg strapped to her body, while the man had 12kg. In total, 28kg of gold paste was recovered, with officials estimating the pure gold content to be over 20kg. Authorities say this could be the largest gold seizure in Surat airport's history. The case highlights the effectiveness of behavioural profiling and inter-agency coordination. *—PTI*

Cops book Pune techie for false rape complaint

PUNE, 22 JULY

Police have registered a non-cognisable case against a 22-year-old IT professional who falsely claimed that she was raped by a man posing as a 'delivery agent' at her apartment in Pune, officials said on Tuesday. The woman approached the police on 3 July with a complaint alleging a 'delivery agent' entered her flat the previous evening and sprayed some chemical rendering her unconscious before committing the rape. However, it was later revealed that the 'delivery agent' was the friend of the woman who visited the flat with her consent. A non-cognisable case was registered against the woman on Monday under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita sections 212, 217 (dealing with furnishing false information to a public servant) and 228 (fabricating false evidence), police said. *—PTI*

Delhi-NCR feels 3.2 earthquake

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

An earthquake of magnitude 3.2 on the Richter scale struck Delhi with Faridabad as its epicentre on Tuesday morning, according to the National Centre for Seismology (NCS). The earthquake was recorded at 6 am, it added. The depth of the earthquake was 5 km below the surface at a latitude, 28.29 degrees north and a longitude 72.21 degrees east, it said. Though there was no report of any damage to life or property, tremors were felt across Delhi-NCR. *—Agencies*

Customers have right to know if hotel is veg: SC

Petitioners say rules during Kanwar Yatra ostracise minorities

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

Th When hearing the QR code directive for eateries along Kanwar Yatra route in UP, the Supreme Court observed that a consumer must know if meat had been served there during a yatra.

Senior advocate Abhishek M Singhvi, appearing for the petitioners, argued the state government was trying to ostracise and exclude minorities by its QR code directive for eateries along the Kanwar Yatra route.

"This is the most divisive initiative, to ostracise people during the yatra, as if these people are untouchables. Will my surname ensure that 'kanwariyas' receive good quality food not menu card?" the senior lawyer submitted.

Referring to news reports over the alleged attacks on certain shops by kanwariyas, the senior lawyer said, "When you sow the seeds of divisiveness, the rest is taken care of by the populace."

In response, Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for the Uttar Pradesh government, said directions were issued in line with the requirements of the Food Safety and Standards Authority regulations.

Justice Sundresh observed a customer must have the choice of knowing if a place was exclusively selling vegetarian items throughout.

"If a hotel is running as a vegetarian hotel all through, then the question of indicating names and other things will not arise. But if only for the purpose of yatra, somebody stops serving non-vegetarian and starts selling vegetarian, the consumer should know," the judge remarked. "To that extent, consumers should have that flexibility. If one hotel was earlier serving non-vegetarian, and for the purpose of better business they serve only vegetarian during the yatra, it will be an issue for the consideration of the consumer. The choice is of the consumer. Consumer is the king." *—PTI*

A traffic jam due to movement of 'Kanwariyas' on the eve of conclusion of the 'Kanwar Yatra', on the Delhi- Haridwar Expressway **PHOTO: PTI**

7/11 blasts: SC to hear govt's plea tomorrow

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

The Supreme Court will hear the Maharashtra government's plea against the Bombay High Court verdict acquitting all 12 accused in the 2006 Mumbai train bomb blasts case on 24 July.

A bench of Chief Justice BR Gavai and Justices K Vinod Chandran and NV Anjaria on Tuesday took note of the urgent mentioning of the state's appeal against the High Court's 21 July verdict by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta and said it will be listed for Thursday.

"It is a serious matter. The SLP (special leave petition) is ready. Please list it tomorrow. There is urgency... Still there are some important issues to be looked at," the law officer said.

The CJI referred to newspaper reports of eight persons being released from prison following the high court judgment.

On Monday, a special High Court bench of Justices Anil Kilor and Shyam Chandak acquitted all the 12 accused, saying the prosecution utterly failed to prove the case and it was "hard to believe the accused committed the crime".

More than 180 people were killed when seven blasts ripped through Mumbai local trains at various locations on the western line on July 11, 2006. *—PTI*

Shaikh Mohammed Ali Alam Shaikh, centre, one of the persons acquitted by the Bombay High Court in the 7/11 Mumbai case **PHOTO: PTI**

3 more held for gunfight in Patna hospital murder

BHOJPUR, 22 JULY

In Bihar's Bhojpur district, three people linked to the murder of gangster Chandan Mishra were arrested after an exchange of gunfire with police.

The suspects – Balwant Kumar, Raviranjan Kumar Singh, and Abhisekh Kumar – attempted to flee and opened fire. Police returned fire, managing to apprehend the three.

The arrested men are believed to be shooters. Mishra was shot dead on 17 July in a private hospital. Authorities arrested four others, including Tauseef alias Badshah, the prime suspect. A police spokesperson noted, "We have now apprehended three of the five shooters; two remain at large, and we will locate them soon." *—PTI*

The IAF signed a multi-billion dollar contract with the US and Boeing Ltd in September 2015 for 22 Apache helicopters **PHOTO: BOEING**

Boeing delivers three Apache choppers to Army

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

American aerospace major Boeing on Tuesday delivered three Apache attack choppers to the Indian Army, officials said.

The company delivered the AH-64E Apaches choppers as part of a contract to supply six helicopters to the Indian Army.

The AH-64 Apache is one of the world's most advanced multi-role combat helicopters and is flown by the US Army.

"These state-of-the-art platforms will bolster the operational capabilities of the Indian Army significantly," the Army said in a social media post.

In 2020, Boeing completed delivery of 22 E-model Apaches to the Indian Air Force (IAF) and signed a contract to supply six AH-64Es for the Indian Army.

The IAF had signed a multi-billion dollar contract with the US government and Boeing Ltd in September 2015 for 22 Apache helicopters.

Additionally, the Defence Ministry in 2017 approved the procurement of six Apache helicopters along with weapons systems from Boeing at a cost of Rs 4,168 crore for the Army. *—PTI*

18-year-old girl 'kidnapped and raped' in Odisha

PARADIP, 22 JULY

An 18-year-old girl was reportedly kidnapped and gang-raped by two men in Jagatsinghpur district, Odisha, while returning home from a birthday party with a friend. The harrowing incident occurred around 8.30pm on Monday, according to police reports.

The young woman's father lodged a complaint after she returned home in a critical condition, bleeding profusely. The victim managed to escape from her attackers, but her friend did not, leading to the horrific assault on farmland nearby.

Jagatsinghpur BJP MLA Amarendra Das confirmed that local police have launched a manhunt to arrest the alleged perpetrators. He assured the public that stringent action would be taken against the culprits following a consultation with the Superintendent of Police.

Officer-in-charge Pravas Sahoo of Jagatsinghpur Sadar police station visited the crime scene and recovered a mobile phone, which may aid in the investigation *—PTI*

RAIN CHAOS

Commuters risk their lives and limbs while driving through a waterlogged road after rainfall, in New Delhi, on Tuesday. Several states are grappling with urban floods and landslides too **PHOTO: PTI**

NCERT removes Odisha's Paika rebellion lesson

BHUBANESWAR, 22 JULY

Former Chief Minister of Odisha, Naveen Patnaik, has voiced his dismay over the omission of the Paika rebellion from the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) textbooks, labelling it a "huge dishonour" to the state's heroic figures.

Patnaik, currently the leader of the opposition BJD, emphasised that the Paika rebellion represented a pivotal moment in Odisha's history when local forces bravely resisted British colonial rule in 1817. "Deeply concerned to know that NCERT has dropped Odisha's Paika Rebellion or Paika Bidroha from its textbooks," he said on X.

The Paikas, a term derived from 'Padatika' meaning foot soldiers, were local militia members drawn from various communities, who fought valiantly for their former kings against colonial oppressors.

Patnaik noted that their rebellion occurred 40 years prior to the sepoy mutiny, making the omission all the more significant.

In response, the NCERT stated that the current textbook is only the first volume, with the second volume set to be released in September-October 2025. *—PTI*

WIFE, LOVER ON THE RUN

New tiles in house reveal man's rotting body

PALGHAR, 22 JULY

New tiles laid on the floor of a house in Maharashtra's Palghar have led to the revelation of a man's murder, prompting police to launch a search for his wife and her paramour who are the prime suspects in the case, officials said. The decomposed body, believed to be buried under the tiles about two weeks back, was exhumed on Monday.

The Mira-Bhayandar, Vasai-Virar (MBVV) police, under whose jurisdiction the incident took place, have launched a search for the woman, Chaman Devi, 28, and her paramour Monu Sharma, 20, who was the couple's neighbour, an official earlier said.

The victim, Vijay Chouhan, 34, was a resident of a housing society in the Gangnipada area of Nallasopara, a distant suburb of Mumbai.

Talking to reporters on Monday, Pelhar police station's senior inspector Jitendra Vankoti said two of Chouhan's brothers wanted to meet him on 10 July as they needed money to purchase a new house.

"They called him (Chouhan), but his phone was switched off. Hence, they came down to his house and enquired with his wife, who told them her husband had gone out for some work. They called her on 19 July to find out if Chouhan has returned home, but her phone was also switched off," he said.

The brothers came to check again and found he was not at home and his wife was also missing, said the inspector.

"When they inspected the house, they found new tiles on the floor. Suspecting something fishy, they removed the tiles only to find a foul smell," he said.

Police suspect Chouhan's wife killed him with the help of her paramour and fled. However, it was not yet clear as to how the duo committed the crime and why. *—PTI*

The victim's brothers went to check on him. They noticed that there were new tiles, leading to the discovery of the body **PHOTO: X**

Delivery guy beaten for peeing in lift in M'rashtra

PALGHAR, 22 JULY

- Residents became suspicious due to an unpleasant odour emanating from the lift. Upon reviewing the CCTV footage, they saw the delivery agent urinating in a corner

A food delivery agent was violently confronted by residents after being caught urinating in the lift of a high-rise building in Virar, Maharashtra. The incident occurred on Monday and was recorded on CCTV, subsequently going viral on social media, prompting widespread public outrage.

Residents became suspicious due to an unpleasant odour emanating from the lift. Upon reviewing the CCTV footage, they saw the delivery agent, clad in company uniform, urinating in a corner of the lift. When he returned to the building shortly after, a group of angry residents confronted him, leading to a heated exchange and an assault on the agent.

The residents subsequently reported the incident to the Bolinj police station, where officials confirmed they were investigating the matter. "We have received a complaint along with CCTV evidence. We are verifying the delivery agent's identity," a police spokesperson stated. Although the act was condemned, police admonished residents against taking the law into their own hands and encouraged them to report such incidents immediately. No official case had been filed by the police by Monday night. *—PTI*

Murmu's questions to the SC on Bill assent

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

A five-judge Supreme Court bench on Tuesday agreed to deliberate upon the 14 crucial questions raised by President Droupadi Murmu on its verdict that fixed timelines for governors and President to act on bills.

The following are the President's questions:

- What are the Constitutional options before a Governor when a Bill is presented to them under Article 200 of the Constitution?
- Is Governor bound by the advice of the council of ministers while exercising options when a Bill is presented before them under Article 200 of the Constitution?
- Is the exercise of Constitutional discretion by Governor under Article 200 of the Constitution justiciable?
- Is Article 361 of the Constitution an absolute bar to judicially review in relation to the actions of Governor?
- In the absence of a Constitutionally prescribed time limit, can timelines (on Governors) be imposed through judicial orders?
- Is the exercise of Constitutional discretion by President under Article 201 of the Constitution justiciable?
- In the absence of a Constitutionally prescribed timeline, can timelines (on Presidents) be imposed through judicial orders?
- In light of the Constitutional scheme governing the powers of President, is President required to seek advice of the Supreme Court when Governor reserves a Bill for President's assent?
- Are decisions of Governor and President under Article 200 and Article 201 of the Constitution, respectively, justiciable at a stage anterior into the law coming into force? Is it permissible for the courts to undertake judicial adjudication over the contents of a bill, in any manner, before it becomes law?
- Can the exercise of Constitutional powers and the orders of/by President/Governor be substituted in any manner under Article 142 of the Constitution?
- Is a law made by the state legislature a law in force without the assent of Governor granted under Article 200 of the Constitution?
- Is it not mandatory for any bench of this court to first decide as to whether the question involved in the proceedings before it is of such a nature which involves substantial questions of law as to the interpretation of Constitution and to refer it to a bench of minimum five judges?
- (Are) the powers of the Supreme Court under Article 142 of the Constitution limited to matters of procedural law or does it extend to issuing directions/passing orders which are contrary to or inconsistent with existing substantive or procedural provisions of the Constitution or law in force?
- Is Article 131 the only Constitutional provision for the Supreme Court to resolve disputes between the Union government and the state governments?

FLYING BACK HOME

British Royal Navy F-35B Lightning fighter jet departs from the Thiruvananthapuram International Airport, on Tuesday, more than a month after its emergency landing at the airport. The aircraft, which took off from HMS Prince of Wales on 14 June, was unable to return to the carrier due to adverse weather conditions. Prioritising safety, it diverted to Thiruvananthapuram Airport. Subsequently, the aircraft developed an engineering issue whilst on the ground, which temporarily delayed its return to the Carrier Strike Group. Engineers from Wales assessed the aircraft and determined that the support of a UK-based engineering team was required. The $110 million jet is the UK's most advanced stealth fleet and one of the most advanced fighter jets in the world ***PHOTO: PTI***

Jagdeep Dhankhar: The most controversial VP

Jagdeep Dhankhar, who once called himself a "reluctant politician", took on the Judiciary over the issue of separation of powers and had face-offs with the opposition in the Rajya Sabha virtually every day during his stint as the Vice President.

Jagdeep Dhankhar resigns from his post as Vice President ***PHOTO: PTI***

Health & Resignation

The 74-year-old leader, who cited medical reasons to resign from the Vice President's post after an eventful day in Rajya Sabha under his chairmanship, had said this month only at an event that he would retire at the "right time", subject to "divine interventions".

While he was admitted to AIIMS for a few days in March this year and appeared not so well at a few occasions, he has been mostly seen as lively and energetic in his public appearances, including in Parliament.

Dhankhar's abrupt resignation nearly two years before his tenure was to end followed a day of surprising developments in the Rajya Sabha for the government, as an opposition-sponsored notice for a motion to remove Justice Yashwant Varma was submitted to him and he mentioned it in the House.

The development came as a jolt to the ruling alliance, which had sponsored a similar notice in the Lok Sabha and taken the opposition on board.

Political life

Dhankhar was the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance's candidate in the 2022 election for Vice President, who is the ex-officio Chair of the Rajya Sabha.

He is the third Vice President of India after VV Giri and R Venkataraman to resign during tenure.

Dhankhar will also go down in history as the only vice president against whom the opposition brought a notice of removal for "partisan" conduct as the chairman of the Upper House.

Unmindful of the notice, which was rejected by Deputy Chair Harivansh, Dhankhar had dubbed it as a "rusted" vegetable-cutting knife which was used for a bypass surgery.

Dhankhar, who had been associated with the Janata Dal and the Congress, joined the BJP only in 2008 after a hiatus of nearly a decade.

He championed issues related to the Other Backward Classes, including the grant of OBC status to the Jat community in Rajasthan.

While his surprise appointment as the West Bengal governor in 2019 brought him back to the political limelight, he did not shy away from the hurly-burly of politics and was caught in frequent run-ins with the state's ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC).

As the vice president and Chair of the Rajya Sabha, his frequent verbal clashes went beyond the TMC. On a variety of issues, from House disruptions to allegations of bills being passed with little discussion, he took on the opposition. Dhankhar, in particular, targeted top lawyers who are also Rajya Sabha members representing opposition parties, especially the Congress.

A lawyer by profession, Dhankhar took on the Judiciary, especially on the issue of separation of powers.

He was harsh in his criticism of the Supreme Court decision to strike down the National Judicial Appointments Commission Act which sought to overturn the collegium system of appointing SC and high court judges.

In the presence of then Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud, he had questioned the top court for striking down a law passed with near unanimity by the two Houses. He had also slammed MPs, saying when the law was struck down, there was "not even a whisper" of protest by the lawmakers.

Early life & career

Born on 18 May, 1951, in village Kithana in Jhunjhunu district of Rajasthan, Dhankhar went to Sainik School, Chittorgarh on full scholarship, he began his political journey with the Janata Dal and won the Lok Sabha elections in 1989, held under the shadow of the Bofors scandal, from Jhunjhunu in Rajasthan.

Designated as Senior Advocate by the Rajasthan High Court in 1990, Dhankhar had practised primarily in the Supreme Court and his focus area of litigation was steel, coal, mining and international commercial arbitration, amongst others.

As a lawyer, he was associated with the black buck case involving actor Salman Khan and had played a key role in getting him bail.

He appeared in various high courts in the country till assuming the office of the West Bengal governor in July 2019. He had a brief stint as Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs under Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar.

In his initial journey as a politician, Dhankhar was influenced by Devi Lal and later shifted to the Congress during the tenure of Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao.

After hanging up his boots as a member of the Rajasthan legislative assembly, Dhankhar focused on his legal career, practising as a lawyer in the Supreme Court.

While naming him as the NDA candidate for the Vice President's post, BJP had described him as "Kisan putra", a move seen in the political circles aimed at reaching out to the politically significant Jat community which had participated in huge numbers in the year-long farmers' protests against agriculture reform measures unveiled in June 2020.

As the Vice President

After his election as the Vice President, Dhankhar met several groups of farmers in the national capital, Haryana and Rajasthan, urging them to go beyond agriculture and get into food processing and marketing to increase income.

On one occasion, his words sounded like a harsh criticism of the Modi government.

Speaking at a ceremony to mark the centenary of ICAR-CIRCOT in Mumbai in December 2024, Dhankhar had said, "Agriculture minister, I request you to please tell me, what was promised to the farmer? Why was the promise not fulfilled? What should we do to fulfil the promise?

"There was a movement last year, there is a movement this year, too."

"The wheel of time is turning, we are not doing anything. For the first time, I have seen India changing. For the first time, I am realising that developing India is not our dream but our goal. India was never at such heights in the world. *—PTI*

LETTERS

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SALAR سالار

Courts flag 'copy paste' culture in statements

- The court said the confessional statements were not found to be truthful and complete in various grounds, and some portions were found to be similar and copied.

The "copy paste" culture in confessional statements and witness statements in chargesheets has been flagged by courts on several occasions, with the Bombay High Court calling it a "dangerous" trend.

The issue came to the fore again on Monday after the HC acquitted all the 12 accused in the 2006 Mumbai train blasts case, saying "the confessional statements are found to be incomplete and not truthful as some parts are a copy paste of each other".

In two cases in May and June, the high court had taken note of "copy paste witness statements" and directed the Maharashtra government to address this growing "menace" and issue guidelines.

In Monday's order in the train blasts case, the HC took a serious note of the similarity in the confessional statements of the accused persons. The court said the confessional statements were not found to be truthful and complete in various grounds, and some portions were found to be similar and copied.

In May, the high court in another case red flagged a "dangerous culture" adopted by the police of copy pasting witness statements even in serious offences and had then asked the Maharashtra government to issue guidelines. The HC had then said that it had come across several such cases where it had noticed such "copy-paste" witness statements.

Last month, the high court took note of a similar trend in yet another criminal case and directed the state government to address this growing "menace".

In the train blasts case, a special bench of Justices Anil Kilor and Shyam Chandak observed that the confessional statements of many accused had identical questions and answers as if they have been "copied".

The bench in its 671-page judgment included a comparative chart of the confessional statements to show the similarities. "Even if it is presumed that the questions are similar, it cannot be ignored that the answers are identical verbatim, which is highly improbable," HC said.

"Two people can answer the same way, but not using the exact same words and in the same sequence. They could share the sane narrative but will express it differently," the court said.

The HC's verdict in the train blasts case trashed the prosecution's reliance on the confessional statements and said certain portions in each of the statements are "identical and appear to have been copied", in complete contrast with the trial court judgment.

Commenting on the "shocking finding", the bench said, "Upon examining the relevant portion related to bomb blasts of each of the confessional statements, we were surprised to find that certain portions of these statements are identical and appear to have been copied."

In 2015, the trial court had upheld authenticity of the confessions & discarded factors such as torture, recording of statements before a police officer instead of the magistrate, and other common oddities in the confessional statements, as pointed out by the defence.

On the argument of the presence of common mistakes in the confessional statements, the trial court had then observed, "merely on the basis of such commonality, it would be preposterous to draw the conclusion that the confessional statements themselves are fabricated and were dictated or prepared by a single authority".

Monday's HC verdict referred to a chart demonstrating the commonality in the confessional statements and said it spoke "volume about the credibility, reliability, and truthfulness of each of the confessional statements".

"These charts strengthen the case of the defence that the accused have not given the confessional statements but their signatures were obtained forcefully. The accused persons also, in their complaint before the Sessions Judge as well as in their deposition, claimed that they have not given any confessional statements, and that their signatures were taken on some papers forcefully by the ATS Officers," the court said.

In 2015, the defence argued that the confessions were not only extracted under duress but also fabricated, pointing out all accused complained of third-degree torture, threat and forced signatures at the hands of Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) and Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) officers.

"The trial court, however, called it "nothing but casting aspersions on the magistrates or the special judge" and junked the claims as "baseless', made for the "sake of making it".

Seven DCPs had recorded the confessional statements. The accused later retracted their confessional statements before the court.

The trial court, after considering the "extent, the nature of the alleged torture" that led to signing of confessional statements, said it was not probable that the accused persons would have "remained quiet till they submitted their retraction applications after over two months". *—PTI*

Last month, the high court took note of a similar trend in yet another criminal case and directed the state government to address this growing 'menace' ***PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA***

Here's what we know about MLK's assassination, federal records

Federal records related to the investigation into the 1968 assassination of the Rev Martin Luther King Jr were released on Monday, following the disclosure in March of tens of thousands of documents about the 1963 assassination of President John F Kennedy.

In January, President Donald Trump ordered the release of thousands of classified governmental documents about Kennedy's assassination, while also moving to declassify federal records related to the deaths of New York Sen Robert F Kennedy and King more than five decades ago.

Trump ordered Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard and Attorney General Pam Bondi to coordinate with other government officials to review records related to the assassinations of RFK and King, and present a plan to the president for their "complete release." Some 10,000 pages of records about assassination were released 18 April.

Justice Department attorneys later asked a federal judge to end a sealing order for the records nearly two years ahead of its expiration date. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which King led, is opposed to unsealing any of the records for privacy reasons. The organization's lawyers said King's relatives also wanted to keep the files under seal.

Scholars, history buffs and journalists have been preparing to study the documents to find new information about the civil rights leader's assassination on 4 April, 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee.

The King family's statement released after Trump's order in January said they hoped to get an opportunity to review the files as a family prior to its public release. King's family, including his two living children, Martin III and Bernice, was given advance notice of the release and had their own teams reviewing the records ahead of the public disclosure.

Here is what we know about the assassination and what scholars had to say ahead of the release of the documents.

In Memphis, shots ring out

King was standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel, heading to dinner with a few friends, when he was shot and killed.

King had been in Memphis to support a sanitation workers strike protesting poor working conditions and low pay. The night before the assassination, King delivered the famous "Mountaintop" speech on a stormy night at the Mason Temple in Memphis.

Martin Luther King Jr was standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel, heading to dinner with a few friends, when he was shot and killed ***PHOTO: ANI***

An earlier march on Beale Street had turned violent, and King had returned to Memphis to lead another march as an expression of nonviolent protest. King also had been planning the Poor People's Campaign to speak out against economic injustice.

The FBI's investigation

After a long manhunt, James Earl Ray was captured in London, and he pleaded guilty to assassinating King. He later renounced that plea and maintained his innocence until his death in 1998.

FBI documents released over the years show how the bureau wiretapped King's telephone lines, bugged his hotel rooms and used informants to get information against him.

"He was relentlessly targeted by an invasive, predatory, and deeply disturbing disinformation and surveillance campaign," the King family statement said.

King family's response to the investigation

Members of King's family, and others, have questioned whether Ray acted alone, or if he was even involved. King's widow, Coretta Scott King, asked for the probe to be reopened, and in 1998, then-Attorney General Janet Reno directed the Civil Rights Division of the US Justice Department to do so.

Dexter King, one of King's children, met with Ray in prison in 1997, saying afterwards that he believed Ray's claims of innocence. Dexter King died in 2024.

What will the public see in the newly released documents?

It's not clear what the records will actually show.

King scholars, for example, would like to see what information the FBI was discussing and circulating as part of their investigation, said Ryan Jones, director of history, interpretation and curatorial services at the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis.

"That's critical given the fact the American public, at that time, was unaware that the FBI that is involved in the investigation, was leading a smear campaign to discredit the same man while he was alive," Jones said.

Academics who have studied King also would like to see information about the FBI's surveillance of King, including the extent they went to get details about his personal life, track him, and try to discredit him as anti-American, said Lerone A Martin, director of the Martin Luther King, Jr Research and Education Institute at Stanford University.

Why now?

Trump's order about the records release said it is in the "national interest" to release the records.

"Their families and the American people deserve transparency and truth," the order said.

However, the timing has led to skepticism from some observers. Jones questioned why the American public had not been able to see these documents much earlier.

Jones said there are scholars who think the records release is a "PR stunt" by a presidential administration that is "rewriting, omitting the advances of some people that are tied to people of color, or diversity."

The Pentagon has faced questions from lawmakers and citizens over the removal of military heroes and historic mentions from Defense Department websites and social media pages after it purged online content that promoted women or minorities. In response, the department restored some of those posts.

Martin said Trump's motivation could be part of an effort to shed doubt on government institutions.

Another factor could be the two attempts on Trump's life as he was campaigning for a second presidential term, and a desire to "expose the broader history of US assassinations," said Brian Kwoba, an associate history professor at the University of Memphis. *—PTI*

Israeli strikes kill 20 in Gaza, 33 die of hunger

DEIR AL-BALAH, 22 JULY

Israeli strikes killed at least 20 people in Gaza, Palestinian health officials said Tuesday, as Israel pushed on with a new incursion in an area that had largely been spared heavy fighting during the 21-month war. Meanwhile, at least 30 people died of hunger in the Stip. Ceasefire talks between Hamas and Israel has dragged on for weeks with no signs of breakthrough. The Trump administration has been pushing Israel to wrap up the war. On Monday, President Donald Trump's Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said Trump was "caught off guard" by a recent Israeli strike on a Catholic church in Gaza and the strikes in Syria. "The President's message on this conflict, that has become quite brutal, especially in recent days. . He wants the killing to end," she said. *—PTI with Agencies*

PHOTO: FREEPK

OpenAI, UK govt partner to boost AI in public services

LONDON, 22 JULY

OpenAI has entered into a partnership with the UK government aimed at enhancing productivity within public services using artificial intelligence (AI). Signed by the science department, this agreement may grant OpenAI access to government data and apply its technology across sectors including education, defence, and justice. Technology Secretary Peter Kyle said that AI will be crucial for economic growth, although the Labour government's swift AI adoption has faced criticism about AI's unlicensed use of artist's work. While the agreement outlines collaboration for an "information sharing programme" and aims to establish safeguards for public protection, it is a statement of intent rather than a legally binding contract. *—Agencies*

Brazil scribe steps on corpse while covering her case

MARANHAO, 22 JULY

A Brazilian reporter uncovered a heartbreaking reality while filming a segment about a missing 13-year-old girl, Raissa, who disappeared in the Mearim River in Maranhão state on 30 June. Journalist Lenildo Frazao was demonstrating the river's dangerous current when he felt something unusual beneath the water. In footage that quickly spread across social media, Frazao hesitated, stating, "I think there's something down here at the bottom of the water," before alerting rescue teams. Shortly thereafter, they recovered Raissa's body at the exact spot Frazao had indicated. Authorities confirmed her accidental drowning after a post-mortem examination revealed no signs of foul play. Frazao said , "You never expect something like this to happen."*—Agencies*

At least 16 killed in rains and floods in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, 22 JULY

Devastating floods have struck Pakistan's Gilgit-Baltistan and Sindh provinces, resulting in the deaths of at least ten individuals. In Gilgit-Baltistan, four tourists died, two were injured, and 15 are reported missing after a cloudburst triggered flash floods in the Diamer district, sweeping away vehicles and blocking key transport routes, including the Babusar Highway. Meanwhile, in Sindh, at least six fatalities were reported due to electrocution and drownings as heavy monsoon rains created severe flooding. A boy drowned in a canal, while two women perished from electrical shocks during the storm. Roads were submerged and power outages hit numerous districts. *—Agencies*

Trump bans WSJ from Scotland trip

Fake and defamatory conduct, says WH Press Secy

WASHINGTON, 22 JULY

US President Donald Trump on Monday removed the Wall Street Journal from one of the coveted press seats from his upcoming Scotland trip and banished one of the newspaper's reporters from Air Force One.

The move comes as a follow up to his lawsuit against publication over its story on his relationship to Jeffrey Epstein. The moves reflect Trump's aggressiveness toward media who displease him — even a media magnate, Rupert Murdoch, with outlets that have been friendly to him in the past.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said the changes were made "due to the Wall Street Journal's fake and defamatory conduct." Leavitt added "As the appeals court confirmed, the Wall Street Journal or any other news outlet are not guaranteed special access to cover President Trump in the Oval Office, aboard Air Force One, and in his private workspaces."

Trump filed a $10 billion defamation lawsuit against the Journal and Murdoch on Friday because the newspaper claimed Trump wrote a sexually suggestive letter that was included in a 2003 album compiled for alleged sex trafficker Epstein's birthday. *—PTI*

Govt pulls 700 Marines back from LA

The Pentagon ordered the US Marines to leave Los Angeles on Monday, more than a month after Trump deployed them to the city against the objections of local leaders. The 700 Marines were deployed 9 June on the fourth day of protests in downtown LA over the administration's crackdown on immigration.

'Trump-Putin talks in China possible'

Russia is open to discussing the possibility of holding talks between President Vladimir Putin and US President Donald Trump, should the latter attend the upcoming commemorative events in Beijing this September, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Monday. The Chinese capital is set to host a military parade on 3 September to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II. Putin has already accepted an invitation to attend the event.

TRUMP, PHILIPPINES PREZ TO TALK TARIFFS & CHINA AT WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON, 22 JULY

President Donald Trump plans to host Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr at the White House on Tuesday, as the two countries are seeking closer security and economic ties in the face of shifting geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific region. Marcos, who met Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth on Monday, is set to become the first Southeast Asian leader to hold talks with Trump in his second term.

Marcos' three-day visit shows the importance of the alliance between the treaty partners at a time when China is increasingly assertive in the South China Sea, where Manila and Beijing have clashed over the hotly contested Scarborough Shoal.

Tariffs also are expected to be on the agenda. Trump has threatened to impose 20 per cent tariffs on Filipino goods on 1 August.

Manila is open to offering zero tariffs on some US goods to strike a deal, Finance Chief Ralph Recto had said. *—PTI*

STRIPPED OF DIGNITY

The Human Rights Watch said immigrants held in US President Donald Trump's facilities have been subjected to inhuman practices, with one person claiming that they were forced to kneel while eating, with their hands shackled behind their back. As of June, more than 56,000 migrants were held in detention **PHOTO: X**

Gopinath oversaw fiscal deficit at IMF

NEW YORK, 22 JULY

Indian-American economist Gita Gopinath rejoined Harvard University as an economics professor after serving in the International Monetary Fund for around 6 years.

Gopinath joined the IMF in January 2019 as Chief Economist and was promoted to the post of First Deputy Managing Director in January 2022.

Prior to joining the IMF, Gopinath was the John Zwaanstra Professor of International Studies and of Economics at Harvard University's economics department (2005-22) and before that she was an assistant professor of economics at the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business (2001-05).

Gopinath oversaw the IMF's multilateral surveillance and analytical work on fiscal and monetary policy, debt, and international trade. As a key member of IMF senior leadership team, she represented the organisation in many international fora, notably the G-7 and G-20.

IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva described Gopinath as an "outstanding colleague—an exceptional intellectual leader, dedicated to the mission and members of the Fund."

Georgieva said Gopinath came to the IMF as a highly respected academic in macroeconomics and international finance and admiration for her only grew through her time at the IMF, where her "analytical rigor was paired with practical policy advice to the membership during an especially challenging period, which included the pandemic, wars, the cost-of-living crisis, and major shifts in the global trading system."

Gopinath also co-authored the 'Pandemic Plan' on how to end the Covid-19 crisis, a contribution which has widely been hailed as filling an important global gap by setting targets to vaccinate the world at feasible cost, Georgieva said. *—PTI*

Gita Gopinath **PHOTO: X**

A man grieves the death of a loved one in the Bangladesh Air Force crash. The death toll from Monday's crash rose to 31, with more deaths expected **PHOTO: PTI**

Students demand fair probe in B'desh crash

DHAKA, 22 JULY

Thousands of Bangladeshi students went on a protest today demanding "accurate" information on casualties and compensation for the families of those killed when a Bangladesh Air Force training jet crashed into a school on Monday.

Meanwhile, the death toll in the incident rose to 31, including 25 children.

The F-7 BGI aircraft, a training fighter jet manufactured in China, experienced a "mechanical fault" moments after take-off and had crashed into a two-storey building of Milestone School and College in Dhaka's Uttara area. Hundreds of students of Milestone School and College, as well as from nearby schools, protested, demanding the "accurate" disclosure of the information about those killed, compensation for victims' families and the immediate discontinuation of outdated and unsafe training aircraft used by the Bangladesh Air Force.

The students demanded a complete list of the injured, a public apology for the assault on teachers by army personnel at the crash site, and reforms in Air Force training procedures to ensure safety.

"The advisers were expected to make a clear statement, and reveal the actual number of the dead, but they did not," a protester said.

Hundreds of students besieged Bangladesh Secretariat complex in Dhaka, where security forces used batons and fired tear gas to disperse them when they tried to forcefully open the entrance. Several were injured. *—PTI*

One child killed and 24 injured as Russia bombs Ukraine

KYIV, 22 JULY

Overnight Russian assaults on Ukrainian cities claimed the life of a child and injured at least 24 others, as Kyiv prepares for a third round of peace talks with Moscow. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced negotiations were set to occur, albeit with limited expecta-tions for progress, particularly given Russian President Vladimir Putin's steadfast demands.

The previously held talks in Istanbul, which yielded some prisoner exchanges but no significant agreements, indicate a challenging backdrop for this new round.

In the latest attacks, Kramatorsk was struck by a glide bomb aimed at an apartment block, resulting in the death of a boy, born in 2015. In Sumy, multiple drone strikes injured numerous civilians, including a 5-year-old.

From Monday evening through Tuesday, a series of relentless assaults included drone strikes hitting gas stations and residential buildings, causing extensive damage across regions. In response, Russia's Defence Ministry reported intercepting Ukrainian drones overnight.

The continued violence raises concerns about the upcoming discussions *—PTI*

F**k him: Hunter Biden on Clooney's article on Joe's health

PHOTO: X

WASHINGTON, 22 JULY

"F**k him and everybody around him," Hunter Biden, son of former US President Joe Biden, said during an interview about actor and prominent donor for the Democratic Party, George Clooney.

He was criticising Clooney over his 2024 op-ed in The New York Times on former president Joe Biden.

In the op-ed, Clooney had urged the Democratic Party to select a new presidential nominee instead of Joe Biden ahead of the 2024 polls.

According to reports, in an interview with Channel 5 in the US, Biden's son offered his perspective on Joe Biden's poor performance in the debate against now President Donald Trump.

The debate with Trump preceded Joe Biden's decision to withdraw from the 2024 re-election campaign.

While recalling events that ended Biden's campaign and political career, Hunter used offensive and profane words to refer to Clooney.

Making a reference to director Quentin Tarantino's alleged criticism of Clooney as an actor, Hunter said, "F*****g George Clooney is not a f*****g actor".

He seemed aware of how he sounded when he said "F**k him and everybody around him," as he followed it with "I don't have to be f*****g nice". *—Agencies*

RE-OPENS THE MYSTERY

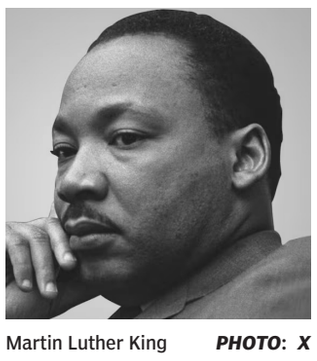
Trump releases FBI records on MLK despite family's protest

WASHINGTON, 22 JULY

The Trump administration has released records of the FBI's surveillance of Martin Luther King Jr., despite opposition from the slain Nobel laureate's family and the civil rights group that he led until his 1968 assassination. The digital document dump includes more than 240,000 pages of records that had been under a court-imposed seal since 1977.

In a lengthy statement released Monday, King's two living children, Martin III, and Bernice said their father's assassination has been a "captivating public curiosity for decades." But the pair emphasised the personal nature of the matter.

Releasing MLK's files may serve as a distraction for the President as he tries to mollify supporters angry over his handling of the Jeffrey Epstein investigation.



Martin Luther King **PHOTO: X**

The King records were initially intended to be sealed until 2027, until Justice Department attorneys asked a federal judge to lift the sealing order ahead of its expiration date.

It has long been established that then-FBI director J Edgar Hoover was obsessed with King and others he considered radicals. FBI records show how Hoover's bureau wiretapped King's telephone lines, bugged his hotel rooms and used informants to get information against him.

However, King's children don't accept the original explanation of assassination. They repeat the family's long-held contention that James Earl Ray, the man convicted of assassinating King, was not solely responsible, if at all.

Ray plead guilty to assassinating King. He later renounced that plea and maintained his innocence until his death in 1998.

In their statement, MLK's children Bernice King and Martin Luther King III repeated their assertions that Ray was set up, pointing to a 1999 civil case in which a Memphis jury in a wrongful death case concluded that Martin Luther King Jr. had been the target of a conspiracy. *—PTI*

Billionaire sells £250 mansion, says 'UK has gone to hell'

LONDON, 22 JULY

John Fredriksen, one of the UK's wealthiest individuals, is selling his opulent 300-year-old Georgian mansion, The Old Rectory, for approximately £250 million ($337 million). The shipping magnate has recently relocated to the United Arab Emirates, citing discontent with the UK's economic landscape, which he claims has "gone to hell".

Located in the affluent Chelsea neighbourhood, The Old Rectory boasts 10 bedrooms and spans 30,000 square feet, complete with lush gardens and a ballroom. Fredriksen, who has owned the property since 2001, is now putting the residence on the market after relocating major business operations to the UAE. He has been particularly critical of the government's decision to abolish the non-dom tax regime, which previously enabled wealthy individuals residing overseas to limit their UK tax obligations.

Fredriksen has reportedly dismissed over a dozen domestic staff as he prepares for the sale, which is likely to be handled through discreet "off-market" transactions and not listed on real estate websites. At 81 years old, he joins a growing list of affluent Londoners departing the UK following recent tax reforms. *—Agencies*

John Fredriksen **PHOTO: X**

- Located in affluent Chelsea, the 300 hundred-year-old mansion boasts of 10 bedrooms and spans 30,000 square feet. Fredriksen is one of the UK's wealthiest individuals

'PoK migrants use fake documents for UK visas'

LONDON, 22 JULY

An undercover investigation has revealed that migrants from Pakistan-occu-pied Kashmir (PoK) are employing fake documents to secure UK visas. This illicit scheme reportedly involves payments of up to £50,000 for fraudulent visa applications, notably facilitated by a consultant in Mirpur.

The Daily Telegraph reported that one fabricated application included a job reference from a fictitious hospital in PoK. While Pakistanis constitute the largest group of asylum seekers in the UK, they are not the predominant nationality arriving via small boats, as many enter on visas instead.

An immigration lawyer noted that these migrants typically do not return after their visas expire. As part of the investigation, a fake CV and employment verification were successfully submitted to obtain a work visa.

The UK Home Office is investigating these claims, saying illegal activities will not be tolerated. It recently reported a 40 per cent decrease in visa applications. *—PTI*

PHOTO: AI

Rupee falls by 5P, closes at 86.36 against USD

MUMBAI, 22 JULY

The rupee pared initial gains and settled for the day down 5 paise at 86.36 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, amid uncertainty over the US-India trade deal ahead of the 1 August deadline. The weakness in the American currency and softening of crude oil prices supported the rupee at lower levels, while foreign fund outflows and a negative trend in domestic equities weighed on the local unit and restricted the upside. At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 86.26 against the greenback and touched an intra-day high of 86.22 and a low of 86.41 against the greenback. At the end of Tuesday's trading session, the local unit settled at 86.36 (provisional), down 5 paise over its previous closing price. *—PTI*

Ashok Chaudhary appointed as GCMMF's chairman

ANAND, 22 JULY

Ashok Chaudhary has been elected unopposed as the chairman of the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), known for its brand Amul. In the same meeting, Gordhan Dhameliya was also elected as the vice chairman, by Anand district collector and election officer Praveen Chaudhary. The elections were held to fill the posts as the tenure of the previous office bearers comes to an end this month. Chaudhary, who serves as chairman of Mehsana District Co-operative Milk Producers' Union, and Dhameliya, chairman of the Rajkot District Co-operative Milk Producers' Union Ltd, will lead GCMMF, which comprises 18 cooperative dairies across Gujarat, representing approximately 36 lakh dairy farmers. *—PTI*

Govt approves 806 PLI scheme applications

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

The government has approved 806 applications under the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes across 14 sectors, including telecom, electronics, pharma, textiles and automobiles. Launched in 2021 with a Rs 1.97 lakh crore outlay, the schemes aim to boost manufacturing and exports. Minister of State Jitin Prasada informed Parliament that Rs 1.76 lakh crore in investments had been realised by March 2025, generating over Rs 16.5 lakh crore in production and over 12 lakh jobs. Pharma sales reached Rs 2.66 lakh crore, with Rs 1.7 lakh crore in exports, making India a net exporter of bulk drugs. Mobile production rose 146 per cent, and exports jumped 775 per cent to Rs 2 lakh crore. Incentives worth Rs 21,534 crore have been disbursed across 12 sectors. *—PTI*

Govt lost Rs 99K cr to corporate tax deductions: MoS

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

The Indian government is estimated to have forgone approximately Rs 99,000 crore in revenue during the 2023–24 financial year due to corporate tax incentives, according to Minister of State for Finance, Pankaj Chaudhary. In a written reply to AAP MP Raghav Chadha in the Rajya Sabha, Chaudhary shared data on tax revenue lost through corporate deductions from 2019–20 to 2023–24. The loss was Rs 98,999 crore in 2023–24, Rs 88,109 crore in 2022–23, and Rs 96,892 crore in 2021–22. Figures stood at Rs 75,218 crore in 2020–21 and Rs 8,043 crore in 2019–20. Data for 2024–25 is not yet available. Since 2016, corporate tax rates have been gradually reduced to spur investment and job creation. *—PTI*

Markets close almost unchanged in volatile trade

Sensex closed at 13.53 pts while Nifty dipped by 28.80 pts

Lack of clarity over the US-India trade deal ahead of the 1 August deadline and profit booking by FIIs hit the market sentiment

PHOTO: PTI

MUMBAI, 22 JULY

Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty closed almost unchanged in a volatile trade on Tuesday as gains in quick commerce and private banking shares were offset by losses in oil & gas and IT shares.

The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 13.53 points or 0.02 per cent down at 82,186.81. During the morning trade, it climbed 337.83 points or 0.41 per cent to 82,538.17 but lost momentum later.

The 50-share NSE Nifty dipped 29.80 points or 0.12 per cent to settle at 25,060.90.

Lack of clarity over the US-India trade deal ahead of the 1 August deadline and profit booking by FIIs hit the market sentiment, experts said.

Among Sensex firms, Eternal jumped the most by 10.56 per cent in a post-result rally. Food delivery and quick commerce firm Eternal, which owns the Zomato and Blinkit brands, on Monday reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 25 crore for the June quarter, as continuing investments in quick commerce and going-out businesses weighed on its bottom line.

Titan rose by over 1 per cent while HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank extended gains after their quarterly results.

Hindustan Unilever, Bharat Electronics, Maruti, ICICI Bank and Mahindra & Mahindra were also among the gainers.

However, Tata Motors, Adani Ports, State Bank of India and Reliance Industries were among the laggards.

The BSE midcap gauge declined 0.62 per cent and smallcap index dipped 0.17 per cent. Among BSE sectoral indices, realty dropped 1.01 per cent, followed by telecommunication (0.87 per cent), auto (0.78 per cent), IT (0.53 per cent) and teck (0.53 per cent).

Consumer discretionary emerged as the only gainer.

"Markets remained range-bound and ended almost flat, indicating a pause amid mixed signals. The market continues to lack clear direction amid mixed earnings announcements and muted global cues," Ajit Mishra – SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said. *—PTI*

ETERNAL SHARES SURGES BY NEARLY 11%

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

Shares of food delivery and quick commerce firm Eternal, which owns Zomato and Blinkit brands, on Tuesday ended nearly 11 per cent higher after its June quarter earnings announcement.

The stock surged 10.56 per cent to end at Rs 299.85 apiece on the BSE. During the day, it jumped 14.89 per cent to Rs 311.60 -- the 52-week high level.

On the NSE, shares of the firm ended at Rs 299.80, up 10.34 per cent. Intra-day, the stock surged 14.55 per cent to hit the 52-week high of Rs 311.25.

Shares of Eternal had jumped nearly 6 per cent on Monday.

In two days, the company's market valuation climbed Rs 41,013.99 crore to Rs 2,89,365.76 crore.

The stock emerged as the biggest gainer among the Sensex and Nifty firms.

Eternal on Monday reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 25 crore for the June quarter, as continuing investments in quick commerce and going-out businesses weighed down on its bottom line.

The company, which rebranded itself as Eternal in March, had reported a net profit of Rs 253 crore in the year-ago period. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

SEBI lauded for allowing Jane Street to trade

MUMBAI, 22 JULY

Market experts have praised the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) for permitting US proprietary trading firm Jane Street to restart trading in Indian stock markets, albeit with certain restrictions. This decision follows the firm's deposit of alleged unlawful gains amounting to Rs 4,863 crore into an escrow account, as mandated by an interim order issued on 3 July, 2025.

Industry commentators have lauded SEBI's balanced approach prioritising both market integrity and investor protection. Corporate lawyer HP Ranina described SEBI's decision as fair and objective, signalling a positive step for the regulatory body. "The deposit of alleged illegally gained funds is only an interim measure, with investigations ongoing. Should SEBI find no wrongdoing, Jane Street will have its funds refunded while being allowed to resume trading," he explained.

Market analyst Sunil Shah echoed Ranina's views, highlighting the importance of safeguarding retail investors. "SEBI's action is commendable; it's crucial for the protection of smaller investors against potential exploitation by larger institutions," he said.

As part of the conditions for Jane Street's trading resumption, SEBI has instructed stock exchanges to closely monitor the firm's trading activities to avert any manipulative practices during the ongoing investigation. Earlier, on 14 July, the Jane Street Group deposited Rs 4,843.57 crore into an escrow account & subsequently requested permission from SEBI to resume trading activities. *—ANI*

India-US trade talks: 5th round done

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

PHOTO: AI

Negotiations for the proposed bilateral trade agreement between India and the US were launched in March 2025, and so far, five rounds of talks have been held, Parliament was informed on Tuesday.

Similarly, twelve rounds of negotiations have been held so far between India and the European Union (EU) for the proposed free trade agreement.

The last round was held from 7-11 July in Brussels.

"India-US bilateral trade agreement negotiations were launched in March 2025. Five rounds of negotiations have been held, the last being from 14-18 July, 2025, at Washington," Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Jitin Prasada said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.

The deadline for the trade agreement is set for 1 August, 2025. But the deal is said to happened during mid-august, after the deadline.

Replying to a separate question, the minister informed that intellectual property (IP) filings in the last five years have increased by 44 per cent to 6,89,991 in 2024-25 from 4,77,533 in 2020-21.

The highest growth was observed in Geographical Indications (GI) with a 380 per cent increase, followed by Designs (266 per cent), Patents (180 per cent), Copyright (83 per cent), Trademarks (28 per cent), and Semiconductor Integrated Circuits Layout-Designs (SICLD) with a 20 per cent rise. *—PTI*

ALL THAT GLITTER...

Gold climbs to over Rs 1 lakh per 10gm

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

Gold prices climbed Rs 1,000 to regain the Rs 1 lakh per 10g level in the national capital on Tuesday due to strong buying by stockists, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

Gold of 99.9 per cent purity soared four-week high of Rs 1,00,020 per 10g from the previous close of Rs 99,020 per 10g.

Previously, gold traded at Rs 1 lakh per 10g level on 19 June. In the national capital, gold of 99.5 per cent purity appreciated by Rs 1,000 to Rs 99,550 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes) on Tuesday. It had closed at Rs 98,550 per 10g in the previous market close.

In line with gold, silver prices too rallied by Rs 3,000 to Rs 1,14,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) on Tuesday. The white metal had ended at Rs 1,11,000 per kg on Monday.

Meanwhile, spot gold slipped 0.28 per cent to trade at USD 3,387.42 per ounce in the global markets. In the international markets, spot silver also declined by 0.11 per cent to USD 38.89 per ounce. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

SBI raises Rs 25,000 cr via share sale

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

The State Bank of India (SBI) has raised Rs 25,000 crore through a Qualified Institutional Placement (QIP) to support business expansion.

The bank's committee of directors approved the closure of the issue after receiving applications and funds from eligible Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIBs), it said in a regulatory filing.

SBI allocated 30.6 crore equity shares at Rs 817 each, comprising a face value of Rs 1 and a premium of Rs 816 per share.

This marks the largest QIP ever in Indian capital markets. The issue was oversubscribed 4.5 times, indicating strong investor confidence in the bank's strategy and India's banking outlook.

Foreign investors accounted for 64.3 per cent of demand, while 88 per cent of final allocations went to long-term investors, including 24 per cent to overseas institutions.

SBI Chairman CS Setty called it a "vote of confidence". *—PTI*

Weak password shuts down 158-year-old firm

LONDON, 22 JULY

KNP Logistics, a UK based 158-year-old transportation firm, has collapsed after falling victim to a ransomware attack that locked them out of their own systems.

According to reports, hackers accessed the company's complete network by cracking a weak employee password. Once inside, they encrypted data, froze the company's operations and asked for a huge ransom, leaving the company frozen and more than 700 people without jobs.

According to reports, a group of hackers known as Akira, got into the system, leaving staff incapable to access any of the data needed to run their business. To regain access, the hackers demanded a ransom payment in exchange for the decryption key.

Though the hackers didn't name a price, a specialist ransomware negotiation firm estimated the sum could be as much as 5 million pounds (Rs 58 crore). The UK has been seeing a surge in similar attacks, and if things continue this way, authorities say this could be the worst year yet for ransomware in the nation. *—PTI*

RBI's FI Index sees 4.3% growth

MUMBAI, 22 JULY

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced a 4.3 per cent increase in its Financial Inclusion Index (FI-Index) for the year ending March 2025, reflecting progress in the country's financial inclusion efforts. The FI-Index, first introduced in August 2021 for the fiscal year ending March 2021, stood at 67 for March 2025, up from 64.2 in March 2024.

The RBI's release indicated growth across all sub-indices—access, usage, and quality—contributing to the improved score. Increased financial literacy initiatives and enhanced usage and quality dimensions have played a significant role in this development. *—PTI*

Ex-ICICI Bank CEO found guilty of Rs 64 cr bribery

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

PHOTO: PTI

In the ICICI Bank-Videocon loan case, Appellate Tribunal under Smugglers and Foreign Exchange Manipulators (Forfeiture of Property) Act has found former ICICI Bank CEO Chanda Kochhar guilty of accepting a Rs 64 crore bribe in return for sanctioning a Rs 300 crore loan to the Videocon Group in 2009.

This overturns the earlier clean chit she received from the PMLA Adjudicating Authority and supports Enforcement Directorate's (ED) provisional attachment of her assets.

Shortly after giving the funds, Rs 64 crore was traced to NuPower Renewables Pvt Ltd, promoted by her husband Deepak Kochhar. This was funnelled via Supreme Energy Pvt Ltd (SEPL), which is linked to Videocon's promoter Venugopal Dhoot. Dhoot resigned from SEPL in 2009, transferring full control to Deepak. In 2020, the ED attached Rs 78 crore assets belonging to the Kochhars. ED arrested Deepak in September 2020 but he got bail. In 2022, the couple was arrested by CBI, only to get interim bail. Bombay High Court, in 2024, deemed their arrest unlawful. *—PTI*

ALARMING REPORT

'Many Indian airlines spend more on publicity than on safety'

MUMBAI, 22 JULY

Around 76 per cent of respondents in a pan-India online survey opined that many airlines in India are spending more on publicity than on passenger safety.

The online survey conducted by LocalCircles revealed that as many as 64 per cent of these respondents had experienced at least one rough flight in the last three years, involving a difficult takeoff, landing, or inflight situation.

The survey, which received 44,000 responses from citizens across 322 districts, assumes significance amidst a spate of incidents, both mid-air and on ground, reported recently.

These included Tata Group-run Air India's Boeing 787-8 aircraft accident that crashed within seconds of taking off for London Gatwick from Ahmedabad last month, killing 241 of the 242 passengers on board and another 19 on the ground.

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) is investigating the crash and has already submitted its preliminary report.

Also, on Monday, passengers on board Air India Kochi-Mumbai flight had a narrow escape after the aircraft veered off the runway during landing, causing extensive

damage to the aircraft.

On the same day, another Air India flight aborted takeoff for Kolkata from Delhi at the last minute due to a "technical snag" while IndiGo flight from Goa made an emergency landing due to a "landing gear" issue.

At the same time, the exterior window frame of a SpiceJet flight operating on Goa-Pune came off mid-air, creating panic among the passengers onboard the Bombardier Q400 aircraft.

The survey first asked air travellers, "Do you believe India-based airlines are spending more on publicity than on safety?" "Out of 26,696 who responded to the question 43 per cent stated, "yes, all of them"; 33 per cent of respondents stated "yes, some of them"; 11 per cent of respondents stated "no, none of them" focus more on publicity and less on safety; and 13 per cent of respondents did not give a clear answer, as per the release.

"In summary, 76 per cent Indian airline passengers surveyed believe that many airlines are spending more on publicity than safety, " it said.

Of the total respondents in the survey, 63 per cent were men while 37 per cent were women.

Also, 46 per cent of respondents were from Tier 1, 25 per cent from Tier 2, and the remaining 29 per cent were from Tier 3, 4, 5 and rural districts, it said.

The survey also asked flyers, "In the last three years, what percentage of your flights (takeoff, inflight or landings) on India-based airlines would you classify as rough or traumatic?"

"Out of 17,630 who responded to the question 75 per cent stated over 50 per cent of flights; 6 per cent of respondents stated 40-50 per cent flights, another 6 per cent of respondents stated 30-40 per cent flights while 9 per cent of respondents stated 10-20 per cent flights, and so on" as per LocalCircles.

"To sum up, 64 per cent airline passengers surveyed in India say they have had at least one or more rough flights in the last 3 years with a difficult takeoff, landing or inflight experience," it said. *—PTI*

Injury-hit India set to move away from tried-and-tested formula

England is leading 2-1 going into the penultimate game of the rubber

MANCHESTER, 22 JULY

INDIA VS ENGLAND

India's Captain Shubman Gill, Head Coach Gautam Gambhir and others inspect the pitch during a practice session ahead of the fourth Test cricket match between India and England, at the Old Trafford Cricket Ground, in Manchester, on Tuesday PHOTO: PTI

An injury-plagued India could be forced to depart from its preferred template when it takes on a reinvigorated England in the fourth Test starting here on Wednesday, hoping to end a winless record at the storied Old Trafford and draw level in what has been a compelling series so far.

Following the first Test in Leeds, India had found a settled line-up by fielding three all-rounders in the playing eleven including Nitish Reddy, who has now been ruled of the series due to a knee injury.

With Ravindra Jadeja and Washington Sundar being the two spin bowling all-rounders, India had the cushion of batting till number eight but that may not be the case in Manchester, where the visitors are yet to win in nine attempts including four losses and five draws. England is leading 2-1 going into the penultimate game of the rubber.

Shardul Thakur, who played the series-opener, would be the direct replacement for Reddy in the playing eleven but he doesn't provide the same batting quality.

Considering the options available, India could also go back to the combination they played at Leeds where they had only one spinner in Jadeja and there were specialist batters till number six with both Karun Nair and Sai Sudharsan in the playing eleven.

Lord's was the first time in the series that Indian batters faltered and the Shubman Gill-led line-up would be looking to course correct with all to play for.

Considering the training session 48 hours before the game, Rishabh Pant appears to have fully recovered from his finger injury. —PTI

"Anshul understands plans and also knows how to execute in the middle. It's not a trait many fast bowlers possess. Zaheer Khan was one of them. He was amazing."

-R Ashwin, former India off-spinner

"When you talk about a five-over spell, when Root comes, you are not bowling the sixth over. You have to give it all. Either you give everything or you rest properly."

-Irfan Pathan, former India all-rounder

Gill slams England's delaying tactics at Lord's

MANCHESTER, 22 JULY

India captain Shubman Gill criticised England's openers for deliberately delaying play at the end of day three in the Lord's Test, calling it unsporting. "They were 90 seconds late to the crease — that's not within the spirit of the game," said Gill ahead of the fourth Test in Manchester. "Yes, teams try to reduce overs, but there's a proper way." The incident led to tense exchanges, with Bumrah sarcastically applauding Crawley and Gill urging him to "show some guts". Gill admitted emotions ran high but said the reaction was due to repeated provocations. Moments earlier, England captain Ben Stokes said his side wouldn't shy away from giving it back if challenged. —PTI

Kaur's ton fires India to 318/5 vs England

CHESTER-LE-STREET, 22 JULY

A splendid 84-ball 102 from skipper Harmanpreet Kaur and a brisk fifty from Jemimah Rodrigues fired India Women to 318 for five in the third and final ODI against England here on Tuesday.

India and England are tied 1-1 having won a game each in the series so far.

Harmanpreet was at her fluent best as she forged robust partnerships on the way to her seventh ODI century overall and third against England, hammering 14 fours during her stay in the middle.

Her knock gave India their second highest ODI score against England, but at no stage their highest score of 333/5 against this opponent, recorded in September 2022 in Canterbury, was under threat.

The India skipper played spectacular stokes particularly on the off-side which she peppered with most of her 14 boundaries. A few of them came down the ground and one was hit behind the wicket. She also stitched vital stands along the way, putting on 81 runs for the third wicket with Harleen Deol to set the platform while her 110-run stand off only 77 balls with Rodrigues gave India the push for a total in excess of 300. —PTI

Newcastle legend Solano is Pak's football coach

ISLAMBAD, 22 JULY

Newcastle United legend Nolberto Solano has been appointed head coach of Pakistan's senior and under-23 football teams. His first assignment will be the AFC U23 qualifiers in September, where Pakistan face Iraq, Oman, and Cambodia. He will also lead the national team in the remainder of their 2027 AFC Asian Cup qualifiers, including October's double-header against Afghanistan. Solano replaces Stephen Constantine, who guided Pakistan to their first World Cup qualifying win in 2023. His appointment is the first major move by the newly-elected Pakistan Football Federation under President Mohsen Gilani. The PFF hailed Solano's experience in Premier League, World Cup, and Copa América, calling it a "new era for Pakistan football."—PTI

Delhi Premier League set for 2 August

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

The second edition of the Delhi Premier League is set to commence with the men's tournament starting on 2 August, followed by the women's competition kicking off on 17 August. The men's final is scheduled for 31 August, with a reserve day on 1 September. The men's tournament features two groups of four teams each. Group A consists of the Outer Delhi Warriors, Central Delhi Kings, New Delhi Tigers, and North Delhi Strikers, while Group B includes the West Delhi Lions, East Delhi Riders, South Delhi Superstarz, and Purani Dilli. Teams will play a total of 10 matches, with the top four qualifying for the playoffs. In contrast, the women's tournament will take place from 17 August to 24 August, featuring four teams that will compete in a round-robin format, with the top two advancing to the final.—PTI

PHOTO: ANI

Soccer legend Joey Jones dies aged 70

LONDON, 22 JULY

Welsh football legend Joey Jones has died aged 70 after a battle with illness. His death was confirmed on Tuesday by Wrexham AFC and the Football Association of Wales. Jones won five major trophies with Liverpool, including the European Cup in 1977 and 1978, as well as the league title in 1977. Admired for his commitment, he made 72 appearances for Wales between 1975 and 1986. He began and ended his career at Wrexham, where he had three spells and later served as coach, interim manager, and club ambassador. Wrexham paid tribute, calling him "a true club legend". A statue in his honour will be erected outside the Racecourse Ground. —PTI

Italy captain eager to face India in upcoming T20

DUBAI, 22 JULY

Joe Burns, the Australia-born captain of Italy's cricket team, is keen to embrace the challenge of facing defending champions India in the opening match of the T20 World Cup next year. Italy qualified for the tournament in India and Sri Lanka following a successful campaign in the recent European Qualifiers. Burns expressed his enthusiasm for playing on the big stage. Reflecting on the emotional journey to qualification, Burns highlighted the dedication and preparation that went into their achievement. A former Australian player with four Test centuries, Burns made the Italian squad through his mother's heritage, which allowed him to merge his family and cricketing passions following the personal loss of his brother, Dominic.—PTI

REMARKABLE FIGHT

Prannoy makes a comeback, Sen exits at China Open

CHANGZHOU, 22 JULY

PHOTO: ANI

Indian shuttler HS Prannoy staged a remarkable comeback to defeat Japan's Koki Watanabe in the opening round of the China Open Super 1000 badminton tournament on Tuesday.

Ranked 35th in the world, Prannoy battled past the 18th-ranked Watanabe with an 8-21, 21-16, 23-21 victory, showing immense grit and composure. After losing the opening game convincingly, Prannoy regained his footing in the second with sharper court coverage and tighter control.

The decider looked out of reach when the Indian trailed 2-11. He narrowed the gap with a run of five consecutive points but was still on the brink of defeat at 15-20, with Watanabe holding five match points. Prannoy saved them all with calm precision before edging ahead 21-20 and sealing a stunning win at 23-21.

"At this point in my career, every win matters," Prannoy said. "There have been some breaks, and the level has gone up. The average age now is around 22–23, and you don't really know the games of these new faces." Meanwhile, it was a disappointing day for Lakshya Sen, who squandered a one-game advantage to lose 21-14, 22-24, 11-21 to China's fifth seed, Li Shi Feng.

In women's singles, Anupama Upadhyay also made a first-round exit, going down 23-21, 11-21, 10-21 to Lin Hsiang Ti of Chinese Taipei. —PTI

Erigaisi, Gujrathi to lead Chennai GMs

CHENNAI, 22 JULY

The third edition of the prestigious Chennai Grand Masters chess tournament is scheduled to commence on 6 August, featuring an impressive line-up including Grandmasters Arjun Erigaisi, Vidit Gujrathi, and Anish Giri.

Esteemed as India's foremost classical chess competition, this year's tournament will host 20 participants from both the Masters and Challengers categories. With a prize pool of Rs 1 crore, players will be vying for crucial FIDE Circuit points, which are vital for qualification for the upcoming Candidates Tournament.

Arjun Erigaisi, Vidit Gujrathi PHOTO: ANI

Organised by MGD1 and backed by sponsor Quantbox, the tournament structure will be divided into two categories: Masters and Challengers. Alongside Erigaisi, Gujrathi, and Giri, other notable Masters participants include Jorden Van Foreest, Liang Awonder, Vincent Keymer, Ray Robson, Vladimir Fedoseev, and Pranav V, who earned his place by winning last year's Challengers.

"This high-stakes tournament at home is always special. As the top-rated player, I understand the expectations, but this year's field is extremely competitive, and every game will demand my utmost effort," stated Erigaisi.

The Challengers category will feature players such as Karthikeyan Murali, Leon Mendonca, Vaishali R, Harika Dronavalli, Abhimanyu Puranik, Aryan Chopra, Adhiban Baskaran, Iniyan P, Diptayan Ghosh, and Pranesh M.

Winners will be richly rewarded, with the Masters champion set to receive Rs 25 lakh, while the Challengers victor will earn Rs 7 lakh and secure a spot in the 2026 Masters. —PTI

Buenos Aires to host MotoGP after 30 years

BUENOS, 22 JULY

Buenos Aires will welcome MotoGP back in 2027 after nearly three decades, with local authorities hoping this event will pave the way for Formula 1's return. The announcement was made by Mayor Jorge Macri at the Óscar and Juan Gálvez racetrack, marking the first MotoGP race in the capital since 1999.

Currently, MotoGP races are held at the Termas de Río Hondo racetrack in Santiago del Estero province since 2014. Macri highlighted the city's historical significance in motorsport, stating, "Buenos Aires used to be the capital of motorsports and motorcycling in the region."

To prepare for the event, the municipal racetrack will undergo extensive renovations starting in October, revamping the track, pits, paddock, and safety areas. The economic impact of MotoGP is projected to be around USD 150 million, creating jobs in hospitality, transport, and more, attracting around 150,000 attendees and millions of viewers globally. —PTI

US tennis star Venus Williams PHOTO: PTI

Venus, Anisimova to join US Open mixed

NEW YORK, 22 JULY

Venus Williams is set to team up with Reilly Opelka, while Wimbledon runner-up Amanda Anisimova will partner with Holger Rune for the new US Open mixed doubles tournament next month. The updated entry list, released by the United States Tennis Association (USTA) on Monday, features 25 duos vying for a place, with only 16 spots available at the event scheduled for 19-20 August, offering a whopping USD 1 million to the winning team.

The deadline for entries is just a week away, after which the eight teams with the highest combined singles rankings will secure their place, alongside eight wild-card invitations granted by the USTA.

In addition to Williams and Opelka, and Anisimova with Rune, new partnerships announced include engaged couple Katie Boulter and Alex De Minaur, as well as Donna Vekic with Hubert Hurkacz, and Karolina Muchova pairing with Andrey Rublev.

Critics have raised concerns about the tournament's focus on star power over traditional doubles specialists, rebranding it as a "pseudo-exhibition" and shifting away from classic competitive formats. —PTI

Carlos Alcaraz withdraws from Toronto Masters

TORONTO, 22 JULY

Carlos Alcaraz pulled out of the Toronto Masters tournament, a day after Jannik Sinner, Novak Djokovic and Jack Draper withdrew from the hard-court event that begins next week. Alcaraz said Toronto "comes just too soon for me as I recover after Wimbledon," where he was the runner-up to Sinner on 13 July, coming up just short of a third consecutive title at the All England Club. Alcaraz owns five Grand Slam titles, one more than Sinner. Sinner is ranked No. 1, Alcaraz is No. 2, Draper is No 5, and 24-time major champion Djokovic is No 6. – PTI

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

CONCESSIONS FOR THORNY ISSUE

BCCI will be covered in National Sports Bill

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

BCCI will be required to take recognition from the National Sports Board even though it is not reliant on government funding PHOTO: PTI

The BCCI will come under the purview of the National Sports Governance Bill that is set to be introduced in Parliament on Wednesday and will be required to take recognition from the proposed National Sports Board even though it is not reliant on government funding.

This was revealed by a top Sports Ministry source on Tuesday.

"Like all National Sports federations (NSFs), the BCCI will have to comply with the law of the land once this Bill becomes an Act. They don't take ministry funding but an Act of Parliament applies to them," the source said.

"They will remain an autonomous body like all other NSFs but their disputes, if any, will also come to the proposed National Sports Tribunal which will become the dispute resolution body for sports matter ranging from elections to selection," the source added.

"However, this Bill does not mean government control on any NSF. Government will be a facilitator in ensuring good governance, not an enforcer."

The BCCI has become a part of the Olympic movement after cricket was included in the 2028 Los Angeles Games where it will be played in the T20 format.

The long-awaited Sports Governance Bill seeks to institutionalise a strong framework for timely elections, administrative accountability, athlete welfare and reduction in litigation through a slew of measures.

The National Sports Board (NSB), appointed entirely by the central government, will have sweeping powers to grant and even suspend recognition of federations based on complaints or "its own motion" for violations ranging from electoral irregularities to financial misappropriation.

The Bill makes some concessions on the thorny issue of age cap of administrators by allowing those in the bracket of 70 to 75 to contest elections if the concerned international bodies do not object. —PTI

Visa delay jeopardises Indian wrestling team

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

India's cadet wrestling team is at risk of missing the prestigious U17 World Championship in Athens, set to begin on 28 July, due to a delay in securing Schengen visas from the Greek Embassy. The 47-member contingent, including 30 wrestlers selected through national trials held earlier this month, is scheduled to depart on Saturday.

The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) submitted a visa appointment request on 10 July but has yet to receive a positive response. With no progress by 16 July, the WFI sought intervention from the Ministry of External Affairs & Ministry of Home Affairs.

WFI President Sanjay Singh expressed concern, stating, "The tickets are booked, and the athletes are ready. Exposure at this level is essential for their development." He added that visa approvals from the Greek Embassy have typically taken just four days in the past. Several top medal contenders, including Asian champions Rachna Parmar, Moni, Ashvini Vaishno, and Manisha, are part of the squad.

Greek Embassy website warns of processing times exceeding 15 working days, especially for applications submitted outside Delhi.—PTI

Man United seal £70M deal for Bryan Mbeumo

MANCHESTER, 22 JULY

- Club sources say Brentford frequently changed their valuation at one point demanding Euro 70m plus Euro 7m in add-ons.

Manchester United have announced the signing of forward Bryan Mbeumo from Brentford for a fee understood to exceed Euro 70 million. The 25-year-old Cameroon international joins on a long-term deal and becomes United's second signing of the summer, following Matheus Cunha's arrival from Wolves.

Mbeumo could make his debut during United's pre-season tour of the US, with matches scheduled in Chicago, New York, and Atlanta.

He leaves Brentford after six years, having scored 70 goals and provided 51 assists in 242 appearances. United had been in talks for weeks, but negotiations proved difficult. Club sources say Brentford frequently changed their valuation at one point demanding Euro 70 million plus Euro 7 million in add-ons.

There was also reported interest from Arsenal, Chelsea, Newcastle, and Spurs. Brentford are believed to have encouraged Mbe umo to consider other offers, while United allegedly offered high wages early on to secure his commitment. —Agencies